

STAND UP, YE DEAD

NORMAN MACLEAN

PRESENTED

TO

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

BY

*the estate of the late
John Brebner, Esq.*

STAND UP, YE DEAD

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

DWELLERS IN THE MIST

HILLS OF HOME

CAN THE WORLD BE WON FOR CHRIST ?

THE BURNT-OFFERING

AFRICA IN TRANSFORMATION

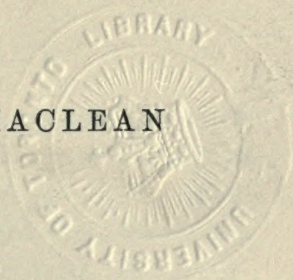
THE GREAT DISCOVERY

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STAND UP, YE DEAD

BY

NORMAN MACLEAN

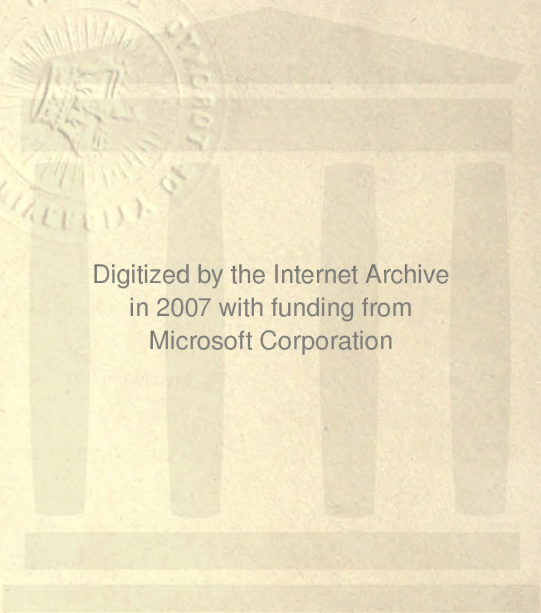
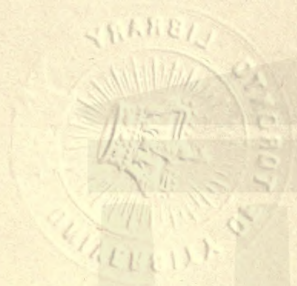


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P R E F A C E

Two years ago the writer published a book called *The Great Discovery*. It seemed to him in those days, when the nation chose the ordeal of battle rather than dishonour, that the people, as if waking from sleep, discovered God once more. But, now, after an agony unparalleled in the history of the world, the vision of God has faded, and men are left groping in the darkness of a great bewilderment. The cause may not be far to seek. For every vision of God summons men to the girding of themselves that they may bring their lives more into conformity with His holy will. And when men decline the venture to which the vision beckons, then the vision fades.

It is there that we have failed. We were called to put an end to social evils

which are sapping our strength and enfeebling our arm in battle, but we refused. We wanted victory over the enemy, but we deemed the price of moral surgery too great even for victory. In the rush and crowding of world-shaking cataclysms, memory is short. We have already almost forgotten the moral tragedy of April 1915. It was then that the White Paper was issued by the Government, and the nation was informed of startling facts which our statesmen knew all the time. At last the nation was told that our armies were wellnigh paralysed for lack of munitions, while thousands of men were daily away from their work because of drunkenness; that the repairing of ships was delayed and transports unable to put to sea because of drunkenness; that goods, vital to the State, could not be delivered because of drunkenness; that Admiral Jellicoe had warned the Government that the efficiency of the Fleet was threatened because of drunkenness; and that shipbuilders and munition manufacturers had made a strong

appeal to our rulers to put an end to drunkenness. It was then that the King, by his example, called upon the people to renounce alcohol, and the nation waited for its deliverance. But the Government refused to follow the King. There is but one law for nations, as for individuals, if they would save their souls: 'If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.' But our statesmen could not brace themselves to an act of surgery; they devised a scheme for putting the offending member into splints. And, since then, it looks as if the wheels of the chariot of victory were stuck in the bog of the national drunkenness. The vision of God has faded before the eyes of a nation that refused its beckoning.

This book deals, therefore, with those evils which now hide the face of God from us. If drunkenness be the greatest of these evils, there are others closely allied to it. Two Commissions have recently issued Reports, the one on 'The Declining Birth-rate,' and the other on 'The Social Evil,'

which reveal the perilous condition of degeneration into which the nation is falling. It is difficult for people, engrossed in the labours and anxieties of these days, to grasp the meaning of the facts as presented in these Reports. In these pages an effort is made to look the facts in the face and to make the danger clear, so that he who runs may read. And the writer has had but one purpose: to show that there is but one remedy for all our grievous ills, even a return to God.

As we think of the millions who have taken all that makes life dear and laid it down that we might live; who have gone down to an earthly hell that we might not lose our heaven; who have wrestled with the powers of destruction on sea and land that these isles might continue to be the sanctuary of freedom and the home of righteousness; who in the midst of their torment never flinched; and of the fathers, mothers, and wives who have laid on the altar the sacrifice of all their love and hope—the question arises, how can

we show our love and our gratitude to those who have redeemed us? We can only prove our gratitude by making a new world for those who have saved us—a world in which men and women shall no longer be doomed to live lives of sordidness and misery. When we shall set ourselves to that task, seeking to meet the sacrifice of heroism by the sacrifice of our service, deeming no labour too great and no effort too arduous, then the vision of God will again arise upon us and will abide.

N. M.

October 7, 1916.

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CHAPTER I

THE EMPTY CRADLE

THE greatest disaster of these days has befallen in the streets and lanes of our cities at home, and, because it has happened in our own midst, we are blind to it. And, also, it has come upon us so gradually and so surreptitiously that, though we are overwhelmed by it, we know not that we are overwhelmed. Our capital cities are leading the nation in the march to the graveyard. In London the birthrate has fallen in Hampstead from 30 to 17·55, and in the City itself to 17·4; in Edinburgh it has fallen in some districts to 10. In many places there are already more coffins than cradles. What would the city of Edinburgh say or do if suddenly one half of its children were slain in a night? What a cry of horror would rise to heaven!

Yet, that is exactly the calamity which has overtaken the city. In the year 1871 there were 34 children born in Edinburgh for every thousand of the population; in the year 1915 the number of births per thousand of the population was 17. Edinburgh has, compared to forty-four years ago, sacrificed half its children. And because this calamity is the slowly ripening fruit of forty years, and did not occur with dramatic swiftness in a night, there is no sound of lamentation in the streets.

I

What has happened in London and Edinburgh is only what has happened over all the British Empire, with this difference—that these cities are leading the van in the process of desiccating the fountain of the national life. While the birthrate for the whole of Scotland is 23·9, that of Edinburgh is 17·8. For the nation as a whole the policy of racial suicide has become a national policy. The marriage-rate increases, but the birth-

rate decreases. A birthrate of 35·6 per thousand in 1874 decreased to 33·7 in 1880, 32·9 in 1886, 30·4 in 1890, and to 23·8 in 1912. If the city of Edinburgh is sacrificing at the fountain-head half of its possible population, the rest of the English-speaking race is following hard in its wake. The facts which to-day confront us spell doom. In the year 1911 the legitimate births in England and Wales numbered 843,505, but if the birthrate had remained as it was in the years 1876-80, the number would have been 1,273,698. 'That is to say, there was a potential loss to the nation of 430,000 in that one year 1911.'¹ In the year 1914 the loss is even greater, for it amounted to 467,837. The nation as a whole is now sacrificing every year a third of its possible population. This is surely a terrible fact. The ravages of war, awful though these ravages have been, are nothing to the ravages which have been self-inflicted. In the years that are past, the race recovered from the

¹ *The Declining Birthrate*, p. 247.

greatest calamities of war and pestilence because there was a power mightier than these—that of the child. The abounding birthrate rapidly replaced the wastage of war. Through the greatest calamities the nation ever marched forward on the feet of little children. One generation might be overwhelmed, but

‘ Away down the river,
A hundred miles or more,
Other little children
Shall bring our boats ashore.’

But alas! when the greatest of all calamities has overtaken the race; when the young, the noble, and the brave have lain down in death that the nation might live, the feet of the little children, on which erstwhile the race marched forward, are not there. We have offered them up a sacrifice to Moloch.

II

The nation must be wakened to the dire peril in which the steadily falling birthrate has placed the race. Militarism

slays its thousands ; this has strangled its hundreds of thousands. But no warning note has been sounded by our statesmen. They were doubtless waiting to see !

The might of every nation depends on the reservoir of its vitality. Let that desiccate and the nation desiccates. Of this France is the proof. That France which, a hundred years ago, overran Europe, fifty years later lay prostrate under the feet of Germany. Twenty years before that national humiliation, France began to sacrifice her children. Lord Acton pointed out the inevitable result ; the wise of their own number warned them—but France went on its way down the slope of moral degeneration. Its birth-rate fell from 30·8 in 1821 to 26·2 in 1851, 25·4 in 1871, 22·1 in 1891, 20·6 in 1901, and to 19 in 1914. The result was inevitable. In the race of empire France fell slowly back. The alien had to be imported to cultivate her own fair fields. She annexed territories, but she could

not colonise them. The prophets who prophesied doom have been abundantly justified. To day France, risen from the dead, is wrestling for her life; she is impotent to drive back the foe without the help of Britain and Russia—she who dominated Europe a century ago! When we read of a Russian army, after a journey round half the world, landing at Marseilles to take their place in the trenches that Paris may be saved from the devastators of Belgium and Poland, we see the fields ripe for the harvest of that policy which sacrificed the race to the individual. The hope for France is that she will rise from the grave of her degeneration, new-born.

What has happened in France is what happened in Rome long before. It was not because of the inrush of barbaric hosts that Rome perished, but because Rome sacrificed its children. In its golden age, when luxury clouded the heart, Rome began to avoid the responsibilities of family life, and so sounded the death-knell of its empire. Here is ever the source of human

decay. The most perfect intellectual and æsthetic civilisation ever developed on earth was that of the ancient Greeks. 'We know and may guess something more of the reason why this marvellously gifted race declined,' says Francis Galton. 'Social morality grew exceedingly lax, marriage became unfashionable and was avoided; many of the more ambitious and accomplished women were avowed courtesans and consequently infertile, and the mothers of the incoming population were of a heterogeneous class.' And the misery which lay so heavily on the heart of Hosea was that Israel was rushing to destruction because children ceased to be born. National licentiousness produced a diminishing population. 'And there are no more births,' cries the prophet beholding the coming doom. Over us the skies are darkening with the portents of the same doom. For we also have given ourselves to the same degeneration. To Puritanic Scotland, a generation ago, France was oft quoted as a solemn

warning of the depths to which atheism and materialism bring a nation. To-day Scotland as a whole is only four points behind France in the matter of this degeneration, and the city of Edinburgh has outstripped even France. And though this policy of the silent nursery and the empty cradle is a policy of racial doom, the land of the Covenanters and the capital of Presbyterianism have made it their own. They have out-Heroded Herod.

III

It is only when this disease, which is threatening the life of the body-politic, is probed, that the full extent of its ravages is manifest. For it is the educated, the cultured, and the rich who are eluding the responsibility of parentage, while the poor and the diseased are still continuing to multiply. In inverse ratio to the income and the size of house is the number of the children. It is the same sad story in every city. In London, the birthrate of Hampstead, a suburb mainly inhabited

by the rich, fell from 30·01 in 1881 to 17·55 in 1911, while that of Shoreditch, a working-class district, only fell in the same period from 31·32 to 30·16. In his evidence before the Birthrate Commission, Dr. Chalmers, the Medical Officer of Health for the city of Glasgow, contrasted the birthrate in two of the poor districts of the city with that in two of the best districts. In the two worst wards the birthrate was equal to 161 per thousand married women between the ages of 15 and 45 years, whereas in the two well-to-do wards it was only 34.¹ In the city of Aberdeen, the birthrate in the poor and congested district of Greyfriars is almost double that of Rubislaw which includes the best housing in the city. In no city is this grim contrast more marked than in the city of Edinburgh.

When the different districts of Edinburgh are considered, it is apparent that in the poor districts the birthrate maintains still some vitality, but among the

¹ *The Declining Birthrate*, p. 343.

well-to-do and the rich it is rapidly diminishing. In the Canongate district there is a birthrate per thousand of 24; in Gorgie, 23·9; in St. Leonard's, 22·4; in Merchiston, 12·6; in Haymarket, 11·5; and in Morningside, 10·9. In the three districts of Edinburgh where the wealthy, the cultured, and the well-to-do abound, there the birthrate is but half of those districts where the poor, the miserable, and the criminal are congregated in noisome slums. In Morningside and Haymarket the birthrate is only a third of what it was in Scotland in 1871. These districts of the city have sacrificed two-thirds of their children to their ease. It is among the terraces and squares of the West Ends of great cities, and among the gardened villas of suburbs that this degeneration has evinced the fulness of its power. Where children could grow in health and happiness, thence selfishness has banished them; where, amid squalor, filth, and vice they are almost doomed from birth, there they are multiplied. Degeneration always

begins at the top, and works downward. At the top only one-fourth are left; at the bottom, two-thirds are still left. But the dry-rot is creeping downward. The lower middle class is following its betters; and the artisan is following hard after. Only in the Canongate is the shouting of children at play still to be heard, and there the State surrounds the last survivors of the race with every temptation to evil and ruin.

This is a grim fact when the future of the race is considered; and of its grimness there can be no doubt. The vital statistics do not lie, and they are the proof. There are other proofs. The statistics of baptisms are steadily falling. In many West End congregations the sacrament of baptism has become a rarity! Sunday schools are getting smaller and smaller. The records of seven years (1908-14) showed the appalling fact that fourteen of the chief Free Church denominations of Britain have lost 257,952 scholars. The materials out of which the Church

was formerly built are crumbling away. Empty cradles mean empty Sunday schools, empty classes, and, ere long, empty pews. The strangest thing is that in face of the forces that threaten destruction the Churches are silent—as if mesmerised! In these last years even the church-going population of this country was rapidly reverting to the base conditions in which Christianity found humanity, and from which the Cross in a measure rescued it. And the Church has lost the power of sounding the trumpet and warning the people of coming judgment.

IV

When we inquire into the causes of this parlous state to which the race has been brought, we find that the greatest is self-deception. If men and women realised what they were doing, they would be horrified. But they don't realise it. They are acting on noble principles! They can provide for and educate two children

better than six ; therefore, in the interests of the race, they will only have two ! One parent wrote to the Press recently that he could only give a public-school education to one boy, and therefore he had no more ! They have the idea that by coddling the few they will usher in the super-race. In short, they murder the race, but they do it on noble principles, in conformity with the sanctions of religion, and in the name of the most high God ! Their lives are a direct reversal of the elementary canons of morality ; but they themselves imagine that they are the most perfect products of evolution, and that they are, by a process of racial suicide, bringing the race to its perfection—ushering in the super-race and the super-man.

What a false education must that be to which the race is thus sacrificed. Education is not a matter of money or accomplishments, but of wonder, reverence, imagination, and awe. Heaven and earth are waiting, without money or price, to

thrill the young heart with glory and loveliness ; but the poor soul must not be born because he cannot go to Eton. And the great wide world is calling for men ; provinces added yearly to the Empire demand men ; great plains wait the spade and the plough ; the realms of King George have as yet only their fringes occupied, and the race must produce the men who will go in and possess, or other races, not yet tired of life, will enter in. And yet, in the name of the race, the race is being sacrificed.

The real root of the evil is selfishness. A generation that sought only its own pleasure refused the burden of parentage. They nursed lap-dogs and preferred bridge to babies. They could not have the luxuries they craved and also nurseries ringing with the joyous voices of children ; and they made their choice. There were found those who called them fashionable ; but nobody will ever call them blessed. And because of that choice families whose names were great in the land are to-day

extinct. Names which in other days raised those who bore them into the fellowship of high ideals and noble service, have disappeared for ever, because a generation which knew no altar at which to worship save the altar of self, sacrificed even the generations to come at that altar. But there is found some saving grace among them. Having silenced the voices of children in their own houses, they organise societies to care for the children in the slums, and preserve their precarious lives. 'In communities like Letchworth or the Hampstead Garden Suburb, families of more than two children are rare among the educated classes, but nearly every one is giving time, energy, and money to the reform movements which they believe to be urgently needed in the interests of the community.'¹ They themselves decline to bear the burden of parentage, but they are ready to teach the poor the best way of bearing the burden. Unconscious that they themselves, the victims of race-weari-

¹ *The Declining Birthrate*, p. 93.

ness and of selfishness, are in direst need of some mission among them that would quicken them to life, they organise missions to quicken others. The dead in the valley of the Dry Bones organise to reform Jerusalem ! Not all the earth can present a stranger spectacle than this—the citizens of the West Ends, who have sacrificed the race to their own ease, solicitous over keeping alive the children of the miserable in the slums ! Their own gardens and nurseries are empty ; but they would keep the children alive in airless, foetid closes. Thus would they condone. But it is no boon to the race to keep alive the children of the diseased and of the unfit ; nor is it a kindness to these children to ensure that they shall grow into the consciousness of the misery into which they are born. The generations of the healthy and the clean have been sacrificed on the altar of selfishness, and no service at any other altar can ever atone.

v

But it might have been worse with the race than it is even to-day, for this obsession of racial suicide might have possessed the nation sooner than it did ; and if it had, then we would truly have been poor indeed. For Sir Walter Scott was the seventh child of his parents ; and it is as certain as most human surmisings, that if the ideal of life which to-day dominates the professional classes in Scotland, had, in the year 1771, found sway in the College Wynd of Edinburgh, Walter Scott would never have been born. John Wesley was one of nineteen children : fortunately for the race, the gospel of the salvation of men through racial limitation had not yet gained devotees in that vicarage where the children were taught to cry quietly ! Alfred Tennyson was the third of seven sons, and if yesterday were as to-day, then ' In Memoriam ' would never have been written. But now, alas ! the door

is shut against the Walter Scotts and Wesleys of the future.

It is unnecessary to multiply instances. Any one can see how impoverished the race would have been, and how different the history of the world, if the door by which mighty souls become incarnate had been shut by the generations of the past. One has but to think of the world with Luther, Knox, Carlyle, and the prophets shut out. In France to-day Napoleon would never have been born! We can already trace the tracks of the withering blight that has seared humanity. In Germany idealism is dead, and there is no prophet either of Christian love or of self-sacrifice. France trampled upon the Church because the Church fought resolutely against the policy of racial suicide and used all its power to save the womanhood of France from submitting to degeneration. Because the Church persisted, France 'extinguished the light of heaven,' and no man was found who could rouse the nation to realise its sin and to repent.

The prophet who could have done so was doubtless shut out. And among ourselves we can mark the slow ebbing of vision, of genius, and of prophetic might. Two generations ago one voice could rouse the whole nation and kindle the fire of fierce indignation against the tale of Balkan atrocities. In our day we beheld the Armenians massacred again and again ; but there was no voice to rouse the nation to indignation or to action. We could not send the fleet to the mountains of Ararat, declared our statesmen, and we acquiesced. One by one the great leaders, the poets, the writers passed into the silence, and the day of the politician and the time-server had come. Did a prophet arise, we no longer stoned him ; we only meted out to him contumely and neglect. In vain did Lord Roberts summon a nation sinking on its lees to arise and quit themselves like men. When the judgment throne of God blazed forth in the heavens, and our startled eyes beheld the sword emerge from the mists that hid heaven

from our eyes, we were engaged in preparations for civil war, and listening to the low murmur of the toiling masses who threatened social chaos. And there was no man found equal to the task of saving us from ourselves. The men who could have saved us were, doubtless, shut out. It is manifest that the richest elements must be lost to any race that limits its own growth. If the sixth and seventh children in a family be the healthiest, as has been established by investigation,¹ then there is no place for the strongest in a family limited to two! Thus it comes that we are left to-day without a Wesley who could kindle the passion of righteousness in the nation's soul; without a Scott who could glorify our patriotism; and without a Tennyson who could set the hearts athrob. We have as yet produced neither a Pitt nor a Wellington. They have been shut out. That is our impoverishment. For great souls will no longer come aboard a world such as this.

¹ *The Declining Birthrate*, p. 126.

VI

And yet there were those who would have given all they had if to them there were given what these others spurned. They knew that the only abiding joy of life is the joy of little children. But that was denied them. They had boundless capacities of love and of sacrifice, but the opportunity of development came not to them. Few cries can pull at the heart-strings like the cry of the old maid :

‘ All day long I sit by the window and wait,
While the spring winds fling their roses every-
where,
And I hear the voice of my husband cry at the
gate,
And the feet of my children tremulous on the
stair.

‘ Hour by hour I dream at the window here,
While footsteps trip and falter adown the street,
And I hear my children murmuring, “Mother,
dear !”
And the voice of my husband crying, “Sweet,
oh sweet !”’

But they who had the opportunity went out pursuing the mirage of pleasure, and they wanted no voices crying 'Mother, mother.' And these others were left with their hunger—left to 'clasp air and kiss the wind for ever.' For the modest never attained in the days when the vulgar and the blatant received the incense and the crown. It was because the pure were disregarded that the cult of the empty cradle cast the glamour of its degeneration over the land.

VII

In the so-called dark ages the mother and the child were an object of veneration if not of worship. Men thrilled with the sense of the sacredness of life because they feared God—the source of life. What the race needs is to go on pilgrimage back to the Manger—back to the Child. But, alas! the spiritually dead cannot go on pilgrimage. First the dead must be quickened. What we need most of all is to cleanse these self-filled, soiled hearts in the foun-

tain of self-sacrifice. The soul of the race, if the race is to be saved, must go on pilgrimage back to the Manger—back to the Mother and the Child.

‘And he who gives a child a home
Builds palaces in kingdom come.
And she who gives a baby birth
Brings Saviour Christ again to earth.’

When, last winter, the enemy poured into a trench, and almost all the defenders were killed, a French sergeant, grievously wounded, grasped a rifle and began to shoot, crying out to his semi-conscious comrades, ‘Stand up, ye dead.’ At the wild cry the wounded arose, and the half-dead began to shoot with unsteady hands. By a resurrection from the dead the trench was saved. To a race that has set its face towards decay, there ringeth from heaven the cry, ‘Stand up, ye dead.’ It is not yet too late to save the race, the empire, and the world.

CHAPTER II

THE ROOTS OF THE EVIL

IF a disease is to be combated the first thing to be done is to diagnose it. It is only when the destructive powers of an enemy are realised that the full power of a nation is mobilised; and the moral forces of a nation will only be mobilised for its own salvation when it realises the full sweep of the forces of degeneration which are united for its ethical destruction. Hitherto the attitude of society towards the evils which threaten its very existence has been one of assumed ignorance. Ostrich-like it buried its head in conventions and was determined not to see. The result has been that the evils grew in an atmosphere of artificial darkness and ignorance, until to-day the fountains of the national life are at one and

the same time going through a process of desiccation and of pollution. The elements in society which have in them a promise of strength are limiting their own existence; the elements which have in them the least promise of vitality are passing on the stream of life diseased alike by inheritance and by infection. It is a disagreeable and distasteful duty to contemplate the foul diseases which prey on the body-politic, but we must face the duty. We must remove the blinkers which have too long hid from us the sweep of those forces which will inevitably work destruction unless the nation be roused to its peril.

I

It is a startling fact that in the very days when the flower of the manhood of the race is perishing by the hundred thousand on land and sea, a campaign is being conducted in London with the express purpose of preventing the wastage of life being replaced by the advent of life. It is almost incredible that such a

thing could be, but those who carry on the propaganda are not even conscious that they are doing wrong. In this very unconsciousness of evil we see the depths to which the nation is falling. In his evidence submitted to the National Birth-rate Commission, the secretary of the Malthusian League, with a frankness which showed that he was thoroughly convinced of the righteousness of the policy he propounded, gave detailed information regarding the propaganda now being carried on by his society :

‘ In the early days of the movement
‘ strenuous and, at first, successful attempts
‘ were made to interest the poorer classes
‘ directly. But the opposition which quickly
‘ arose rendered the continuance of this
‘ policy impracticable, and it was only at
‘ the commencement of 1913 that it was
‘ deemed possible to start an open-air
‘ campaign in one of the poorest districts
‘ of South London. The response was so
‘ gratifying and the demand for practical
‘ advice so persistent, that the League

‘determined at an early date thereafter to
‘issue gratuitously a leaflet describing the
‘most hygienic methods of limiting families,
‘subject to a declaration by applicants that
‘they were over twenty-one years of age,
‘married or about to be married, that
‘they were convinced of the justification
‘of family limitation, and that they held
‘themselves responsible for keeping the
‘leaflet out of the hands of unmarried
‘people under twenty-one years of age.
‘. . . The applications received show un-
‘mistakably that the poor and the debili-
‘tated are most anxious to adopt family
‘limitation, and are deeply grateful for the
‘necessary information. . . .’¹

The Commission naturally asked for a copy of this leaflet.

‘I have some of these practical leaflets
‘here,’ answered the witness, ‘but I have
‘one thing to say about them. That sort
‘of thing has to be done with precautions.
‘It has only been recently issued, and only
‘those can take it who will sign a declara-

¹ *The Declining Birthrate*, p. 90.

‘ tion that they are either married or about
‘ to be married, and that they consider the
‘ artificial limitation of families justifiable.
‘ If any of the members here come within
‘ that category—that is prejudging the case
‘ —they can have it, otherwise I am afraid
‘ I cannot give it.’

This is the only touch of comedy in the greatest tragedy of our day. The Commission of grave and reverend seigneurs were not to be trusted with a leaflet which was circulating gratuitously in East London. It is manifest that no declaration signed to the contrary will prevent these leaflets passing from hand to hand, or the information they convey from man to man and woman to woman. There is no limit to the evil wrought by even one such leaflet. Down the streets, by word of mouth, the secret goes. And wherever it goes, death begins to reign. And the nation disregards the undermining of its existence. It is not enough that bomb and shell and gas should be laying its manhood low in swathes; it suffers a campaign

in its streets and alleys that wages war on the life that is struggling to be born. If the hands that sway the destiny of the race were not paralysed such a propaganda would not be suffered for a day.

The secretary of the Malthusian League made it clear in his evidence that he had a grievance against the educated and leisured classes in this country. It was not the intention of the League that its teaching should result in the impoverishment of what is good in humanity. The teaching of eugenics aims at the improvement of the soul of the race by developing the force of heredity and by improving environment. The effect of the Neo-Malthusian propaganda has been hitherto to discourage worthy parentage, and to limit the birth of children among the class who would transmit a worthy heredity and could supply a good environment. Thus the result has been the very reverse of that aimed at by eugenics. But the Malthusian League is not repentant. 'Notwithstanding the fact that, in spite

‘ of its efforts, the limitation of families
‘ has up to the present been on dysgenic
‘ lines, the Malthusian League cannot pro-
‘ fess regret that the limitation has occurred’
—thus its secretary. It did not intend
that result, but it does not regret it. It
desired to direct its teaching to the poor
and enable them to restrict their children,
but the well-to-do classes prevented them.
‘ All we could do was continually to direct
‘ all our movement to convincing the
‘ educated classes of the necessity of so ex-
‘ tending it; but they allowed it to stop
‘ at themselves and did not let it go any
‘ further. . . .¹ I think it would have
‘ been far better had they realised that the
‘ restriction should have been conveyed to
‘ the quarters where it was most needed.’
The position seems to be this: The upper
classes who already had established a
monopoly of the good things of this world,
when the teaching of race-limitation came
their way, added this also to their monopoly.
Having assimilated it, they kept it to

¹ P. 125.

themselves. This was the last fine fruit of their selfishness! But, now, the opposition has weakened in a world of greater enlightenment, and the Malthusian League is determined to resist that selfishness which would keep the good things of this world as the preserve of certain classes. Therefore it starts its new campaign in South London. 'We know that the want of restriction among the poorest grade is enormously due to ignorance,' says its secretary. 'It is clear, therefore, that if such knowledge is available to them it will conduce to more restriction in those quarters than at present.' Having achieved what it did not intend—having silenced the voices of children in Park Lane and Belgravia—the Malthusian League is now determined to achieve what it intended—silence the voices of children in Lambeth and Poplar!

II

When the arguments on which the Malthusian League base their propaganda

are considered, they are at once revealed to be the fruit of false reasoning and of ignorance. Neo-Malthusianism is based on the principle that poverty, disease, and premature death can only be eliminated by restricting the increase of the population. As disease and premature death are largely due to poverty, the problem is how to eliminate poverty. It is, however, manifest to any one who considers the sources of the world's food supply that these sources could provide food for a population many times greater than that at present inhabiting this planet. The vast territories of the British Empire are at present only occupied along their fringes. The most fertile regions—the vast spaces of Africa watered by noble rivers—cry out for the spade and the plough. Canada is doubling its wheat supply every few years. Counties at home, lying derelict, are waiting for intensive cultivation. The remedy for poverty is a right distribution of the world's food, and a right direction of the energies of men towards the production

of food. When life is directed to its primary object, the production of food, then the greater the wealth of life the greater will be the food supply. The true wealth of a nation is therefore its life.

But the Neo-Malthusians are incapable of regarding life with anything but a jaundiced eye. If anywhere life should be desired it should surely be in Australia, where a population only equal to that of Scotland inhabit a continent. But even there the Neo-Malthusians will have nothing but restriction. The birthrate in Australia has descended to 10 per thousand, but the Neo-Malthusians regard that with satisfaction. 'What I am absolutely certain of is that no country can, from year to year, increase the amount which it produces by enough to hold all the people that can be born, and Australia apparently has just got to the point; its birthrate has just descended to 10 per thousand, but there has been a correlation between the birthrate and deathrate. . . . I do admit that, at the present moment, it

'has just got to the point of balance.' The hollowness of an argument such as that is apparent when it is remembered that the wheat crop of Canada in 1915 was more than 50 per cent. higher than that of 1911. Canada in five years increased its food supply by half; it is impossible in five years for the birthrate to increase the population by half. Canada has done even more, for since 1901 it has increased its wheat supply by 125 per cent., and its population is only two per square mile. Yet in the vast empty territories of Australia and Canada the Neo-Malthusian would spread his propaganda!

What is manifest is that if teaching such as that of the Neo-Malthusians be the ideal adopted by the people of this Empire and the Dominions beyond the sea, then the Empire is doomed. Australia has laid it down as an unalterable policy that the continent shall be a white-man country. How can that policy hold in Australia with a birthrate of 10 and in New Zealand with a birthrate of 9

per thousand? The abounding birth-rate of Japan and China demands an outlet. If the men of British race succumb to race-weariness and adhere to the policy of racial suicide, they must give place to those that are not yet weary of life. It will be impossible for any race in the future to hold territories which they cannot occupy, and lands which they cannot replenish or cultivate. And, yet, in the region of empty spaces, the Neo-Malthusian regards racial limitation with satisfaction. 'When the birthrate stood 'at that level [19 to 20 per thousand] 'in Ontario, was that a desirable level 'for Ontario . . . being a young country 'with plenty of room for expansion?' was one of the questions addressed to the secretary of the Malthusian League. 'I am quite decided Ontario should at 'present have only that birthrate,' was the answer. Surely human folly has seldom transcended this.

But the Neo-Malthusian has another argument to support his delusions. It is

that the lowering of the birthrate leads to the lowering of the deathrate, and thus that there is no decrease in the population. It was on this ground that the secretary of the Malthusian League justified the restriction of births even in Ontario. 'When Ontario did increase its birthrate, its deathrate increased; it gained no increase of population thereby, so I am absolutely definite in that case.' But the Superintendent of Statistics, Dr. Stevenson, promptly pricked that bubble. The alleged increase of the deathrate in Ontario was due to a miscalculation. The increase in 1911 of the population was underestimated. The population in Ontario increased in 1911 to 2,523,000; the birthrate went up from 21·10 to 24·7, and the deathrate came down 14·0 to 12·6. So far from the increased birthrate in Ontario producing an increased deathrate, it brought with it a diminished deathrate. At the touch of reality the edifice of the Neo-Malthusian crumbles into sand. He is not deficient in patriotism; for he says so.

‘ We probably should get more colonising
‘ and more efficient colonisers if we had a
‘ smaller birthrate,’ declared the secretary
of the Malthusian League. Empty cradles
are going to populate the Empire ! There
is surely no limit to the faculty of human
self-deception.

III

Though the arguments of the Neo-Malthusians be fallacious, and the basis of their teaching illusionary, yet they have gained the allegiance of a vast portion of the population of the Empire. A birth-rate lowered by half in some cities, and by a third over the whole of the nation, testifies to the withering blight which has passed over the race. In a little while Britain will be as France—its population stationary. We have yet a little way to go ere we have reduced the birthrate to the level of Australia, 10 per thousand ; but we are on the way to it. When that day draws near there will be no more emigrants available for the territories that we hold ;

and the door of Australia must open to the yellow races. A race that chooses death can no longer shape or mould the issues of life.

The statistics which abound in the Report are as the ringing of a passing bell. But far more alarming than the mere statement that the race is now sacrificing a third of its children is the fact that this limitation has not yet come to its full development. The stage which is now attained is that a vast majority of the educated classes sacrifice the race to their self-indulgence. The figures given in a booklet entitled *The Small Family System* show that 'in the Fabian Society in about 90 per cent. of the more recent marriages they have voluntarily restricted.' The super-intelligent of the Socialists have set their faces towards the drying up of life's sources. The evidence amply proves that everywhere 'the size of the family tends to vary inversely as the social status of the parents.' The figures provided by the Registrar-General for

England and Wales showing the births classified according to the occupation of the father, are as follows :

Social Class.	Births per 1000 married males aged under 55 years, including retired.
1. Upper and middle class	. 119
2. Intermediate 132
3. Skilled workmen 153
4. Intermediate class 158
5. Unskilled workmen 213

The race is now being carried on mainly by the poorest classes of the population. But, when the Neo-Malthusians have carried out to the full that campaign on which they have now entered; when the faith in life which the poor have not yet lost, shall at last be undermined; when it will be true of Poplar as of Belgravia, and of the Canongate as of the West End, that having a family is no longer a British ideal—what then is to become of the race and the Empire? What we must realise is that this process of racial destruction will steadily go on working down the social

scale until the race is doomed—unless the conscience of the race be roused and the forces of degeneration routed. Nobody has studied the whole problem with more thoroughness than Dr. J. W. Ballantyne of Edinburgh. ‘If this voluntary restriction has begun in one group of society,’ says Dr. Ballantyne, ‘it has not expended itself yet upon the other groups . . . it is working its way, one might almost say, as a leaven, it has not yet reached the larger groups of people, and therefore I expect the fall in the birthrate to go on.’ In the present miasma which has fallen on the race, when women have become ‘less scrupulous,’ and doctors advise with greater and greater frequency the restriction of birth, Dr. Ballantyne can only summon us to ‘bring up the reserves and strengthen the recruits.’ Life has ceased to be desired; its continuance is no longer ‘convenient.’ It is inevitable that, unless a change comes in the spirit of our day, the process of decay will go steadily on.

IV

It is a repulsive picture this which grows before our eyes ; but there are blacker shades still—so black that one can only indicate them and pass on. So far we have only considered the restricted birth-rate as the result of the teaching of Neo-Malthusianism ; but there is a further restriction which even the Neo-Malthusian condemns—the destruction of the unborn life.

The best way to indicate this, the blackest of all the signs of moral decay, is to quote here and there from the Report.

Witness—The LORD BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK.

Question.—It is your general experience, my lord, that there is among the working-classes, so far as you can judge, a larger amount of abortion than the use of anti-conceptions ?

Answer.—That is what I should say.

Dr. Scharlieb.—They say that there are five abortions to every one live birth.

The Lord Bishop of Southwark did not hesitate to declare that the destruction of unborn life in South London 'betrays instincts which are worse than the savage.'

Witness—Sir THOMAS OLIVER, M.D., LL.D.,
B.Sc., of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Witness.—The waste of infant life was enormous owing to the expectant mother miscarrying. . . . For twopence a woman might purchase sufficient . . . to cause her to miscarry, while she at the same time might imperil her own life. . . .

Witness—Dr. AMAND ROUTH, M.D.

Witness.—My main contention was in regard to the enormous antenatal mortality. . . . The number of abortions is about four times as great as the still-birth. . . . Assuming that the still-births are 3 per cent., and the abortions 12 per cent., the two together are 15 per cent.

Of the mass of evidence regarding this terrible aspect of the national life, these quotations must suffice. The public conscience has, in this last generation, become so deadened on the part of masses of the

people that life is no longer sacred. 'It is always a great comfort to me,' says Dr. Amand Routh, 'that it is criminal as well as wrong—that one can show that the law considers it to be murder.' To escape from inconvenience, to secure freedom from responsibility, to attain untrammelled devotion to pleasure—the weapon of murder is freely used. One of the witnesses, Mrs. Burgwin, told the Commission an experience. 'When I went to Moscow,' says Mrs. Burgwin, 'I went to see the great Foundling Hospital . . . and I felt very ashamed when I came away, because I said to a Russian doctor there, "You know this is very serious ; you have got a couple of thousand illegitimate children, and by bringing them into a place like this you are only encouraging illegitimacy!" And he said to me, "Well, Mrs. Burgwin, is not that better than what you do in England? There, even your married people murder the children."'

V

There is another cause of the falling birthrate which I will only indicate. However necessary it may be to look facts in the face, there are facts so ugly that they do not bear even contemplation. One great cause of the fall in the birthrate is the social disease. One or two quotations must suffice.

‘I hold,’ says Dr. Ballantyne, ‘that in a given family, if syphilis enters it, it is the most deadly thing for the future of that family.’

‘Have you any idea about the proportion of antenatal deaths which are due to syphilis?’ ‘Of course, one’s idea is,’ answered Dr. Amand Routh, ‘that it is an enormous proportion—perhaps one-fourth. . . .’

‘Dr. Willey was of opinion that probably 32·8 per cent. of the total still-births were due to syphilis.’

‘I would hold the view that it is a considerable proportion,’ says Dr. Ballantyne,

‘founding upon Fournier’s evidence in France, where he speaks broadly of families being swept out of existence before birth by syphilis.’

‘We have been recently told that there are 500,000 fresh cases of syphilis yearly in this country and three times that number of cases of gonorrhœa.’

It is the opinion of Sir William Osler that of all the killing diseases syphilis comes third or fourth.¹ ‘While we have been unable,’ says the Commission on the subject, ‘to arrive at any positive figures, the evidence we have received leads us to the conclusion that the number of persons who have been infected with syphilis, acquired or congenital, cannot fall below 10 per cent. of the whole population in the large cities, and the percentage affected with gonorrhœa must greatly exceed this proportion.’ Regarding all that, one can only re-echo the words of Sir Thomas Barlow: ‘I think it is terrible.’²

¹ *Report of Royal Commission on V. D.*, p. 23.

² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

It is only when the after-effects of these diseases are considered that the full measure of the peril which they create is realised. They not only lead to an enormous loss of child life, but they also undermine the health of those on whom they have fastened their fangs, transmitting the misery even to the third generation. The evidence shows that more than half the cases of blindness among children are the result of these diseases in the parents. Out of 1100 children in the London County Council Blind Schools at least 55·6 per cent. were clearly attributable to this cause. In adult life this evil is responsible for diseases which often manifest themselves after many years, such as general paralysis, affections of the brain and spinal cord, and epilepsy. It is because the people have been left in ignorance as to the terrible consequences not only to themselves but to their children, that the welfare and happiness of life are thus sacrificed to sin.

‘It is one of the few diseases which

‘ are hereditary,’ writes Sir Malcolm Morris, ‘ and in the hereditary form its effects ‘ are even more disastrous than in the ‘ acquired variety. . . . Many of its inno- ‘ cent victims die in the first few months ‘ of life from meningitis, hydrocephalus, ‘ convulsions, and other affections ; if they ‘ survive they are liable to recrudescences ‘ of the disease up to the twentieth year or ‘ even later. Growth is checked, vitality ‘ depressed, intelligence stunted ; hideous ‘ deformities may be produced, sight and ‘ hearing may be destroyed, and the cen- ‘ tral nervous system may be involved, ‘ with results similar to those which super- ‘ vene in adults. What a story of mutila- ‘ tion and massacre of the innocents ! ’ ¹

When these results are considered, there comes a feeling of amazement that a nation should suffer such plagues to afflict its vitality without putting forth every effort to stamp them out. The nation which has become thus afflicted by its own vices must have sunk to a depth which

¹ *The Nineteenth Century and After*, April 1916.

may well fill the observer with consternation. And the remedies which are proposed will only deliver the people from the consequences of their acts—they will not cure the disease itself. The only salvation lies in the ideal of the pure heart once more shining forth before the eyes of man. The law of God decrees that sin be punished; and deliverance for humanity from punishment can only come by conformity to the law of God. But this is not how we now regard it. We have set ourselves to combat the social disease not because vice is hateful but that in the future vice may become safe. When we shall have attained our end the shadows shall have gathered in deeper blackness. The few remaining stars shall be blotted out.

VI

Such, in bold outline, are the forces which threaten the continuance and the well-being of the race. On the altar of degeneration England and Wales offered

up in the year 1914 over 600,000 children.¹ Who can compute the laughter and joyousness, the happiness and the riches thus consumed at the shrine of our self-indulgence? And every sign points to this vast sacrifice of life increasing with the years. For we are emancipated; and we smile at any restraint emanating from—God! Science has delivered us from that. We know it now—the voice of law is only the echo of outworn superstitions. And science, which has broken the chain of restraint, and which has provided the means for gratifying desire without incurring responsibility, has blessed us also with the high-explosive shell. This great deliverer—science—has put into our hands the power of pruning life at both ends. If the world is to find salvation through the absence of life—then, salvation is at the gate. In other days it gave

¹ *The Declining Birthrate*, p. 248:—

Deaths in antenatal period	138,249
Fewer births owing to reduced birthrate	467,837

Total loss for 1914	<u>606,086</u>
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our fathers a shudder to read of the moral depravity of Rome ere the scourge of God fell on it. The old Romans can, alas! cause us to shudder no longer. We have improved upon them. Science has helped us greatly, and with its aid we can sound depths of depravity the Roman never reached. The triumphs of science have in our hands become instruments of an immorality which would have made even heathen Rome shudder. And as yet we are only at the top of the declivity. The momentum of our descent is gathering force with the years.

It may be asserted that this view is alarmist, and that, however bad our state, we are better than Germany. No thought of an enemy from without need, therefore, mar our satisfaction in our swift declension into the morass of vice. That comparison may be granted: we are better than Germany, though Germany has not yet sacrificed her children in such hecatombs as we have done. But what we have to consider is not the birthrate in

relation to that of Germany but in relation to the extent of the earth surface which owns our sway. The end of the war will find Germany confined within narrow borders with all her colonies gone. The Germany of to-morrow will have no room for racial expansion. But we own the fourth of the world's surface. That vast territory calls to us for men. And if we individually choose our own selfish ease, and sacrifice the generations to come, we shall have failed in our imperial calling. We may win an empire on the battlefield; we will inevitably lose it in the silent nursery.

Not in relation to this or that earthly factor has this question to be considered. It is in relation to the Moral Order of the universe that we must face it. The unseen Power that reigns is a Moral Power. Somewhere in this universe, Righteousness is throned. Whatever race in the past surrendered to evil and made degeneracy its god—upon that race the judgment of the consuming sword fell. Though the

judgment often tarried, it always fell. As one considers the moral condition to which we have come, the worse condition to which we are hastening, the destruction which befell those of old in whose footsteps we are now treading, the dust accumulated on buried cities and vanished races who made their pleasure their god, and the flaming of the sword wherewith God removed in all ages the cankerous growth from the body of humanity, —the question leaps forth: How can we escape the righteous judgment of God? Will there be found a place of repentance for us who have sacrificed the child of flesh and blood to the calf of gold¹ and have surrendered ourselves to the sensuous delights of worshipping at our chosen idol's shrine? Unless the nation finds the place of repentance, it needs no prophet to foretell the end. For we have been living for more than a generation a life 'such as God has never suffered man to lead on earth long, which He has always

¹ See pp. 85-88.

crushed out by calamity or revolution.' And the startling fact is this—that when the judgment of God befell, it was on men unconscious that they were being judged. They came to the Great White Throne and never discerned it; they reached the end and never knew it to be the end. Thus they perished—Babylon and Rome alike. And we are as they. The judgment-seat is visible in the heavens, but our eyes never turn to it; amid the crash of the world's civilisation we hear no voice calling to repentance.

CHAPTER III

THE EMPTY COUNTRYSIDE

IN the past the decay of civilisation has been heralded by the decay of the countryside. When the cities had sucked the life of the plains and valleys dry, then came the end. It was thus with Israel. Out of the villages and farms nestling in valleys the people were driven into cities by the rapacity of men eager to be rich. This was the burden that weighed on the prophets, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field till there be no room.' When in the country places there was no room for the common folk, then national decay ensued in Israel. It was so also in Rome. The day came when one magnate owned the 'territories of whole tribes' and left them 'to be trampled under foot by herds or ravaged by wild beasts,' or garrisoned them 'with slave

prisons or citizens held in bondage,' and Rome sucked dry the rural life of Italy and of the lands washed by the Mediterranean. Therewith paralysis seized the greatest of the world-empires. In every age overgrown cities have proved themselves the graveyards of civilisation. And the primary cause of the evils which now threaten us is that we have made the countryside waste. Counties and parishes have been depleted of life that cities might grow more and more. It has been calculated that nine out of ten families in England have migrated to the city in the last three generations. In and around Glasgow half of the population of Scotland is concentrated. Three-fourths of the whole population of Scotland has been massed in the industrial belt of country that lies between the Forth and Clyde estuaries, and which includes Edinburgh and Glasgow and the towns round which are centred the iron and coal industries. We have driven our manhood and womanhood out of the sunshine

and the clean air and the silent spaces into the foetid, sunless closes of monstrous cities. There the clanging of machinery leaves no place where the soul can be still. And upon us has fallen the woe declared against those who devastate the quiet places, adding field to field, until there is no room for the poor.

I

The greatest tragedy of our day is that the English race which has conquered the fourth of the world's area has lost its own land. In the course of a hundred years the spoliation of well-nigh the whole nation has been consummated. The villages and rural parishes of England which once teemed with life are left to decay. The life and the wealth which reared the parish churches of England—those monuments of vanished piety and of forgotten arts—and which produced with skilled handicraft the 'ornaments and church furniture, bells and candlesticks, crosses and organs, and tapestry and banners,' have ebbed away, leaving behind them only a

memory. The world can nowhere show a desolation such as has overtaken rural England. Elsewhere, be it France or Germany, Serbia or Bulgaria, the cottages are scattered over close-tilled land, and the labour of man is rewarded by the earth yielding its increase. But England presents the spectacle of decayed cottages, of vast spaces 'laid down to grass,' of stately houses with the silence of tree-shaded parks round about them, and of a land which yields no longer food but sport. 'As 'things go now,' writes an observer, 'we 'shall have empty fields, except for a few 'shepherds and herdsmen in all the green 'of England.' In his book, *The Condition of England*, Mr. C. F. G. Masterman has presented a picture of rural decay which is steeped in tears. 'A peasantry, 'unique in Europe in its complete divorce 'from the land, lacking ownership of cottage or tiniest plot of ground, finds no 'longer any attraction in the cheerless toil 'of the agricultural labourer upon scant 'weekly wages'—thus Mr. Masterman. If

the life-blood of a nation be derived from the clean countryside, then 'England is 'bleeding at the arteries, and it is her 'reddest blood which is flowing away.'

It is to the Moloch of an industrial civilisation that this sacrifice of life has been made. The desolation was wrought because men, in their haste to become rich, were blind to the true values of labour. They forgot that the primary work of man is to produce food, and that upon the production of food the whole structure of the commonwealth depends. Cities endure because, far beyond their ken, the land yields wheat and fruit and supports wandering herds. All other work is parasitic ; that work alone is essential. But a perverted civilisation sacrificed the primary to the parasitic, and poured its rewards into the lap of the workers who added nothing to the world's true riches. The road to success and honour lay only through the city. Formerly the gentleman was he who tilled the ground ; in our day the man who ploughs and reaps

is deemed a boor. Clean hands and clean linen are now the badges of a gentleman. The sense of the dignity of making the soil yield its riches has vanished from among us. Everything is ordered that the stream of life from the fields and the open sky into the barracks of sooty, squalid cities may swell into an ever-increasing river. We had only one ideal and that was cheap food. Other nations carefully conserved the workers of the soil and protected them from a competition that might deprive them of the reward of their labour. During the last fifty years, while our population has rapidly increased, our agricultural population has been diminished by a million workers. A hundred years ago we had 9,000,000 acres producing wheat, to-day we have only 1,800,000 wheat-growing acres. We have indeed sacrificed our true life. In the whole of the British Empire, covering a quarter of the globe, the total white population living on the land is only 13,000,000, whilst that of Germany alone, working the land and

living by it, has risen to 20,000,000. We had one watchword which stirred our blood—the cheap loaf! The meaning of the watchword was hid from us. For the cheap loaf meant cheap labour, and cheap labour meant ever-increasing riches to the exploiters of toiling masses in the lamp-lit cities. But the ‘cheap loaf’ meant for the country places which yielded it, that the husbandman could not live by his labour. Floods of oratory were poured forth; under the guise of philanthropy the ideal of cheap food was held up in palpitating periods by capitalists who reaped their sure reward in labour correspondingly cheap, and the fields of England were steadily laid down to ‘twitch and thistle.’ A generation wrought this desolation, unconscious of the desolation that it wrought. The agricultural labourer became at last obsessed by the watchword which wrought his ruin. Even Mr. Masterman records with sympathy, if not with satisfaction, the attitude of the farm labourer to the new ‘fiscal reform.’

‘Oh dear!’ is his comment, ‘we want no taxes on food.’ We destroyed him, but we did it so skilfully, and with so splendidly assumed an air of philanthropy, that the worker on the land did not even recognise the instrument wherewith we destroyed him. He has been the victim of political factions—of politicians who have sacrificed the State to party. The Conservatives not unnaturally made the monopoly in land a tenet of their faith, and resisted every claim on the part of the poor to call any portion of England, however small, their own; the Liberals made the policy of Free Trade an inviolable doctrine, and though that policy mainly enriched the capitalist, they assumed in its support the semblance of enthusiasm for humanity, if not of the passion of religion. But between the two, as between the upper and nether millstone, the rural population of England has been ground to powder. Not for the first time in history the desolation of a kingdom has been wrought by time-serving politicians.

And with the devastation which our national policy thus wrought in the countryside there passed away, slowly but steadily, the ancient landowners. These men had in their veins the life-blood of England; they built up the Empire and sent forth their sons to be the 'frontiersmen of all the world.' Innumerable ties bound them to the people. Squire and peasant were at one in love of the land, and each knew that his welfare was bound up with that of the other. But the lands had to be sold, and the new-rich came from the cities and replaced the aristocracy of the countryside. They had no ties binding them to the sons of the soil. They knew not the traditions to which the landlord and tenant were loyal. They only sought to transplant a bit of the city into the heart of the country. It was then that the country folk awoke to the insecurity of their lives. At a word they were sent forth homeless wanderers. The hint of a right to be vindicated brought down unemployment and eviction on the head of

England's freedmen. The cottager in the country could no longer call his soul his own. In the city he could at least call his thoughts his own, and he could give them utterance in stumbling words without incurring the risk of being made homeless. No wonder the rural labourer escaped for his life. The nation, as usual, awoke too late to the realisation of its ebbing life. It began to make provision for the people of England acquiring a moiety of the land of England. But it is easy to turn a smiling land into a wilderness; to convert the wilderness back into a garden is the baffling problem. 'To-day,' writes Mr. Masterman, 'land is being slowly and laboriously offered to the people, a generation after the people who once hungered for that offer have flung themselves into the cities or beyond the sea.' Any parvenu can sweep the population of a parish forth into Poplar and Lambeth; it may well pass the wit of man to bring their children back from Poplar and Lambeth to the land.

II

To-day four-fifths of the population of England is crowded in cities, and there they are left 'to soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime.' In Scotland the same forces have been at work with the same result. Parishes of soil as fertile as is in the world are to be found in the occupation of half a dozen farmers, some of whom hold two or more farms. Land which might hold hundreds of families, if the land were available for the people as in France, is empty save for a handful of farmers and their servants. Though great markets are at the door waiting the produce of intensive cultivation, the small holder is crowded out. Denmark pours into our cities the produce which the monopoly in land prevents being supplied at home. Holland feeds us in time of peace and our enemies in time of war. That the Danes and the Dutch may have stores wherewith to feed our foes, the fields of England are laid waste.

The only life now left in the country is the ebb and flow of the overflow from the cities. Germany and Austria have withstood a two years' blockade, because the land is there kept under cultivation and yields the necessaries of life. Our enemies have not been blind to a nation's true riches. Did we lose the command of the sea for a few weeks, there would be no escape from destruction. For we have sacrificed our bread supply to the production of Brummagem wares.

But there has been in Scotland an additional element of tragedy in the rural situation which has not been manifested in England, at least on so large a scale. Whole parishes have in the Highlands during the last century been laid waste by wholesale ruthless evictions. Behind the processes which have made the glens and mountain slopes desolate of men, and which have massed a million of human beings into a city of restricted area such as Glasgow, piling them, family on the top of family, in noisome tenements, there lies

perhaps the greatest tragedy of the nineteenth century. And that tragedy is all the more poignant in that it has been wrought in silence, none paying it any heed. Glens filled with men have been transformed into desert places filled with sheep or deer, and that at the will of one man, while statesmen paid no heed and the world took no cognisance.¹ For were not these things done beyond the Grampians? And what happened there was of no consequence.

It is almost incredible that, during the last century, glens and countrysides in Scotland were stripped bare of human beings by wholesale eviction. The thought of these poor thatched houses burning

¹ A hundred years ago there were 5 deer forests in Scotland, now there are 200. Since 1891 the acreage in Scotland under deer and devoted to sport increased from over 2½ millions of acres to over 3½ millions of acres. This process of increasing the area devoted to sport has gone on even since the war began. This land, to the extent of two millions of acres, can be reclaimed for human use. Scotland has talked of afforestation for a generation—and done nothing! During the last twenty-five years, while the politicians pursued their game, the people of Scotland lost an additional million of acres so far as food production is concerned!

and the people driven away to find refuge where they could—in the slums of Glasgow or across the seas—is to our minds so intolerable that many will deny such crimes were ever perpetrated. Yet they were perpetrated. The hearthstones on which the peat fires unceasingly burned, which for generations had never grown cold, were left to the rain and the snow. Some parishes were laid wholly waste. In one such parish which I know, out of which sixty-one officers bearing their King's commission went forth to fight in the Napoleonic wars, there has gone forth hardly one officer to-day. Where hundreds were found of old in the day of need, a mere handful of ghillies or shepherds is found to-day who can take up arms. For that parish which gave Scotland the greatest family of preachers and leaders in religious and social movements was laid ruthlessly waste, and the parish minister, who held all the honours which his Church and country could bestow on him, was left in his manse solitary

amid the wilderness which greed created, to die of a broken heart. That most beautiful of islands—the Isle of Skye—sent forth 21 generals, 48 colonels, 600 commissioned officers, 10,000 soldiers to fight in the great wars for human freedom against the Corsican; to-day the Isle of Skye can scarcely muster 1000 in the greatest crisis of human history. One parish in the western sea-board which sent 200 men to fight for freedom in the Napoleonic wars to-day could only muster six; for the parish fell into the hands of a man who wanted a deer forest for the passing of his leisure hours. These figures are but representative of what has happened all over the British Isles. An old man, who was carried as a child in the corner of a plaid out of his native glen when the cataclysm of eviction burst on the unbelieving crofters and cottars, while cottage after cottage was given to the flames, when asked what he remembered about it, answered: ‘I can see yet the smoke rising to heaven; and I can hear

the sound of weeping down the glen.' In my boyhood's days I heard an old man speaking of the townships of his youth being laid waste, and he said: 'I remember it as one remembers things seen in a dream.' There are many books in which those who may desire can inform themselves of the depths to which it is possible for greed and tyrannous power to bring men who have no ideal but the gratification of their desires. The cruelties and the wrongs perpetrated in the Scottish Highlands on a loyal and law-abiding people can only be paralleled by the atrocities of the slave traders in Africa. They would be unbelievable were it not that the State suffered the same processes in a gradual and less dramatic form to accomplish the same ends in England. The only difference was that the Scottish evictor concentrated in one day of sword and fire the desolating work which in England and in Lowland Scotland was diffused over many years. Whether the result be that of a day or of

a hundred years, the folly and the guilt are the same. The same fate as overtook rural England and Scotland has in even more fateful degree overtaken Ireland. The vast majority of the Irish are now outwith their native isle. In the Ireland of to-day only the derelicts are left. Throughout the length and breadth of the three kingdoms, the country places in which strong men were reared have been made desolate that cities in which men decay might extend and enlarge their slums.

III

In this devastation of the country places the abnormal process of eviction played but a small part compared with the normal processes which worked steadily for the emptying of the country and for the growth of the city. A blinded legislature sacrificed everything to the growth of an industrial civilisation. What the ruling classes wanted was the increased prosperity of Glasgow and Birmingham; it mattered nothing though the country-

folk perished. They had, however, some consideration for the countrysides. They caused schools to be built everywhere at the expense of landlords and tenants. But in these schools they caused nothing to be taught but the dates of battles and the names of rivers. In them there was nothing taught of the wonder of growing life, of the miracle of earth pouring food into the lap of men, of the glory and beauty of the greening earth, or of the dignity of breaking up the fallow ground. I say, nothing of worth was taught in these schools—nothing, except what roused an unhealthy craving for the life that could be lived with unsoiled hands! And for the support of these schools one lady who owned a large estate in the west had to sell her jewels that she might pay the school rate, and tenants parted with their stock for the same end. For the State had decreed that the country places should pay for the support of those processes which were to work their own desolation. Landlords were

made bankrupt and tenants ruined that bloated cities might grow more and more.

Every development of the great national machinery designed for the intellectual illumination of the people has wrought more and more desolation in the country places. The last of these has been the worst. In Scotland the parish school since the days of Knox was the centre of intellectual activity, and the parish schoolmasters were able to send their scholars straight to the University. But the pundits at last decreed that this must cease. Secondary education was banished from the parish schools. The teachers who formerly had scope for, and joy in, the higher spheres of teaching were consigned one and all to the withered fields of elementary education. All the secondary teaching was concentrated in the towns where central schools were established, to which promising children who desired such training were collected.

The result has been disastrous. The light of higher education in each rural

parish has been quenched. The secondary education has been concentrated in towns, and only a few parents could face the additional burden of providing lodgings for their children. The pundits made no provision for the proper accommodation for boys and girls at the most critical period of their lives. No hostels were built for them. In insanitary villages they were left to whatever provision decayed houses could provide for them. In these schools religious and moral training was banned. After school hours boys and girls, removed from the salutary influences of their homes, were left to the social joys of the street corners. The main industry of many of these towns was that of the hotel and public-house. The result has been that a large proportion of boys and girls who in the shelter of their homes would have grown into a worthy and useful citizenship have been utterly ruined. The system was devised that the few might be pushed up the ladder into the region of the higher

knowledge, leaving all record of God and moral duty behind with their elementary textbooks; and no provision whatever was made to safeguard them, in the course of the giddy ascent, from toppling over and falling into the mud. And the great system, instead of elevating, crashed them into the mire. And this devastating process still goes on. The rising generation in the country places in Scotland are made unfit for country life by a false education, and, through its neglect of their higher needs, many of them are ruined. A nation that spends five millions a day on war would not in its education system provide for the social and moral needs of its sons and daughters. It sacrificed everything to the brain. And the result has been desolation in many a family in Scotland in lonely glens and by the sea. Our education machinery has, in truth, been Prussianised, and in the process the soul has been grievously wounded. The class that provided the ministers of religion in wide stretches of Scotland, provides

them no more. A generation of boys left to the moral influences of the street corners, undisciplined and disregarded, can provide the nation with clerks and not with leaders in the sphere of the soul.

IV

There is no sign that the nation is waking to the misery wrought by the bureaucrats. All the cry is for a further march along the same road. The Government have in these last days appointed two Commissions on Education, the one to 'inquire into the position occupied by natural science,' and the other 'into the position occupied by the study of modern languages,' in the educational system, and they are to consider the matter, the one in relation to the 'interests of the trades, industries, and professions' dependent on science, and the other in relation to the 'interests of commerce and public service.' In this there is no hint that what the nation mostly needs is the development of character, the re-enforcement of soul. We are to investigate with

our eye on commerce ; the material gain is still our goal. The Germanised minds have won their first victory. The future path of our development is to be the path of the Teuton, and we are to tread it like him, sacrificing our souls to Mammon. For the sake of commerce we must go on pushing our boys faster up the ladder, heedless of debris of moral wreckage at its foot !

A still more depressing symptom is the policy already adumbrated by the Government to mitigate the devastation wrought in the country places. Our armies now number millions, but the Government introduces a bill to settle a few hundred soldiers on the land ! Millions of acres lie waste, but the Government proposes to deal with a few thousand acres here and there. The needs of the future require an exodus from the Egypt of the slums and from the slavery of that industrialism which adds nothing to the world's true riches, and the re-establishment of the people in their true heritage, the land. But the Government

proposes to reinstate a handful. There is no sign that the politician has as yet realised that agriculture is the noblest of industries, a nation's true wealth. And there is no realisation of the only method by which this can be done. It is the magic of ownership that alone will restore to the people the joy in the land. The rent system is doomed to failure. In the words 'my own' there is a glamour which turns even sand into gold. When to the masses that have been despoiled there is again restored the privilege of designating a little portion of the land of their fathers, their own, then, and only then, will the country places once more waken to life, and the desolation of generations be at last removed. A nation for which millions have been found ready to die must surely provide for the living such social conditions as will enable them to live joyous and clean lives. In kingdoms teeming with riches, no heart must be starved of beauty, no life starved of bread, and no soul starved of God.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAN IN THE SLUM

THE countrysides have been laid waste, but what of the men and women who were thus driven from the wide, wind-swept spaces to stony streets and airless barracks? What did it mean of happiness and well-being to them? Let us try to present the contrast to ourselves.

I

In no sphere is there such an opportunity of happiness as that of work in the open air, when men have learned to love the sights and the sounds of the wide sky. The pleasantest sight in the world is to watch a ploughman driving straight his long furrow, or resting at the furrow end crooning to his well-

groomed team, while the fresh air fans his face and the westering sun casts a mantle of loveliness around him. He may be a lover of nature, this man. He may watch the coming of the birds and the first white flashing of the swallows' wings. If he does not own the land there is no reason why he should not 'own the landscape.' At the close of the day he goes home and is met by the welcoming shout of his children, who, strong and sturdy, clamber on his knees.

But it was decreed that he be driven into a slum ; and see what has been made of him ! Walk through the East End of Glasgow on a Saturday night and mark the product of the 'highest civilisation' the world has ever known. Out of reeking public-houses men and women reel into the streets. Degradation and brutality have marked them for their own. Their diseased bodies witness to their lives of sensuality. They were children of the fresh air, now 133,000 of them in

Glasgow live in one-room houses with the very decencies of life denied them; and 486,000 live in one-room and kitchen houses—a total population of 619,000, in the one city, doomed to live under conditions which render all privacy impossible. Often a father and mother and three or four children live in a single apartment. When that single apartment is at the top of the rookery, the pitiful spectacle is seen of little children with bowed or bent legs climbing painfully up the squalid stairs. The mothers of the race can be seen toiling up weary flights of stairs carrying a heavy basket on one arm and a child in the other. Once streams of purest water from the hillsides flowed day and night, singing to them, cleansing for them; now it is impossible to keep clean, for in these rookeries the washhouse is only available once every three weeks! Out of a million of a population, 60 per cent. live under conditions such as these. The Medical Officer of Health (an office that can be no

sinecure in such a city) has declared that there are 10,000 houses in Glasgow absolutely unfit for human habitation, and which it is impossible to make fit. But a doomed population must go on living in them because there is no other accommodation to be found for them. In these places the children perish in the first year of life at a rate of 200 per thousand ; but in the West End only 50 children die per thousand. Out of every thousand babies born in those parts of the city in which the poor are massed, 150 at least are destroyed by the social conditions which the highest modern civilisation has created.¹ After a day of nerve-racking toil the freeborn Scotsman comes home to his lair, the one-roomed house which can command the use of a wash-

¹ Dr. Chalmers has pointed out in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 1913, vol. vi., that the mortality of infants varied inversely with the number of rooms occupied up to four.

Infant mortality in one-apartment houses, per thousand, 210					
”	”	two	”	”	164
”	”	three	”	”	129
”	”	four	”	”	103

house once in three weeks, to the foulness and the squalor, and what is he to do? The State has provided. The whisky-shop is there, at the corner, with its brightness and its allurements and its forgetfulness of woe. The State says to him, you can escape out of your intolerable surroundings through the door of alcohol. And he escapes. There is no other course left for him, and only the Pharisee can blame him. Thus it comes that the State-regulated alcoholic manufactories of paupers and criminals pass the slum-dwellers through the mill, and they come forth moral refuse. Children with the faces of old men and women cry to each other the undertones of a babel of profanity. For weeks they never see the sun, moving under a pall of black smoke. They rise to toil in the dark, and all day they watch and feed clanking machinery, and they return home in the dark. The State has provided for them the narcotic of drunkenness. Vigour dies low in them. Out of every

three one is rejected as physically unfit to bear arms. When stringency is exercised one out of two is rejected. In the process of transplantation and disinheritance the people have lost not only the land but their bodies. For them there has been yielded no profit. They have lost the world, but they have not gained their souls.

For the greatest of all their losses is this, that they have lost the sense of God. In the country they could not fall to those depths. There they were face to face with the Unseen.

‘ Who plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod—
He trusts in God.’

But in the East Ends of our cities no work of God is ever visible. And they were told by many wise men that God was superfluous. Everything could be explained without any God! There was nothing but sensations! Ah! who can blame him because he has sunk so low?

They took the earth from him; they took the sunlight from him; they took the air from him; they darkened the moon and the stars for him—until at last they took God Himself from him. And it has all been so cunningly wrought that he is all unconscious that he has been driven out of Paradise. That is the essence of the grim tragedy.

II

In the countryside it was possible for men and women to live clean and decent lives, and those who are left there continue to do so. In proof of that it may be cited that the north-west districts of Scotland can still show a birthrate of 34·8. Were it not for the 'Celtic Fringe' and the country places, the birthrate of Scotland would be far lower than it is. For the country and the hillsides are the land of far vistas and empty spaces, so that the apostle of racial limitation could not there plead that there is no room for more. And life is natural; children,

so far from being an endless burden to their parents, are looked upon as life's true riches, the helpers and the supporters of their parents. The crofter's house may be poor, but it rings with the shouting of children at play, and love spreads its endless feast. In these places, so unsophisticated and so 'uncivilised,' children are not a burden, and, however large the family, there is room in the heart for more.

But far different is it when the family is driven from the countryside into the slum. There the new civilisation decrees that men and women must no longer live natural lives. If they have children they must pay the penalty, and the penalty is that landlords refuse to accept them as tenants. Long, long ago a Child was born in a stable 'because there was no room for them in the inn.' There was room for tax-gatherers and soldiers and traders, but there was nobody found to make room for a woman in the hour of her direst need. The Child was shut

out. But that was in a rude age and the door was shut by untutored men. The most startling of all the facts which leap to light as we consider the social and moral condition of our generation is the fact that after nineteen centuries of Christianity, in the heart of the most 'perfect' development of civilisation, the same tragedy is perpetrated—the child is shut out. There is room for everything but not for innocence. There is conclusive evidence to prove that the property owner in London has set his face against tenants who happen to be the unhappy parents of little children.¹ Childhood is

¹ The following quotation from a newspaper of this summer is illuminating:—

'A woman with six children, who sought advice at Acton, said that so as to get a flat she told the landlord that she had only three.

'He accepted her deposit, and allowed her to enter the flat, but on learning of the other three children, ordered her to leave, and would not take her rent. He described her as a trespasser, and threatened to eject her unless she left.

'“If I had told him the truth,” said the woman, “he would not have taken me. As soon as I say I have six children, people will not listen any longer.”

'The magistrate told applicant that she must make arrangements to leave.'

that which nobody now desires except a few poor people whom the Malthusians have not yet instructed. 'A printer told me the other day,' says Monsignor Brown, '. . . he had five children; when he went to an agent the other day, the agent bowed him out and would not listen to him, though he wanted five rooms and was prepared to pay the rent.'¹ If a family exceeds four the position becomes acute. 'If a family consist of four or five children,' declared the Assistant Housing Manager of the London County Council, 'they would have a difficulty in obtaining accommodation.' All this is quite natural. The property owner wants his rent, and he wants it without his property suffering undue dilapidation. And the rent is more certain when there are not more than two or three children. He is not a philanthropist; he wants his money, the race must look after itself. Profits and not children—that is the rule of

¹ *The Declining Birthrate*, p. 202.

his life. In every city it is the same. The owner of house property will not have children in his houses, even as the London County Council will not have married women as teachers—for they might have children! This then is what we have done. We have deprived four-fifths of our population of their birthright in the air and the sunshine and the land, and we have decreed that they must live unnatural lives—otherwise we will allow them no place wherein to live! We have built up a civilisation in the midst of which childhood is anathema.

III

When we look beneath the surface and ask the reasons why the poor cannot find houses in which they can live with comfort, we discover that it is a matter of finance. The extortionate prices of building sites render it impossible to build on them any dwelling-houses except tenements. Here is an example:

‘ Unless the land were given you, you
‘ could not possibly build cottages,’ says
the Secretary of the Guinness Trust. ‘ Our
‘ new site, which was supposed to be sold
‘ to us on cheap terms, cost £11,000 an
‘ acre, so that you can see the landrent
‘ per tenement will work out at about
‘ 2s. 6d. a week, and as I say, the Ecclesi-
‘ astical Commissioners professed to sell
‘ to us at a low rate, having regard to
‘ our objects. It is really not a stiff price
‘ for the position.’ In this bare statement
we touch bedrock. The Guinness Trust,
founded with the philanthropic purpose
of providing decent housing for the poor,
buys an acre for building purposes from
the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who, from
their very name, must be interested in
the poor, and they get it cheap at
£11,000 an acre! What does it mean
this fabulous cost of land in great cities?
A hundred years ago that acre would
be bought and sold at its agricultural
value of a few score pounds sterling.
Whence, then, this inflated price? The

answer is that the people created that value. We deprived them of the land of England and drove them to the cities. In the cities they, by their labour, made the land valuable; and the value which they themselves created we turn against them. We exiled the people from the soil; and in the cities, where we piled them, we turned the values, which they created, into an instrument for their ultimate destruction. They have made the land so valuable that cottages can no longer be built on it, and the man with four children searches in vain for a house. It is a staggering product of a perfect civilisation. And still more staggering when one realises that the birthrate of these poor people, for whom the Guinness Trust provides some measure of comfort, is 36·95 per thousand, as compared to 17·53 in the west. The section of the population still willing to carry on the race must pay £11,000 an acre for the sites of their teeming tenements. Only after that form can civilisation make room for the child.

IV

What guerdon has the State provided for the massed populations who have the very riches they create thus turned into an instrument for their impoverishment? One looks for that guerdon in vain. The vast majority of them are consigned to a life of privation from birth to death. Factories pour heavenward the smoke which lies over our cities as a pall, and in the gloom men and women toil with bloodless faces producing the goods which, elaborate and costly, or cheap and nasty, crowd the markets of all the world. But ten millions of the toilers go shivering through life ever tottering on the verge of the precipice of want. Over one and a half millions of them were rated as paupers in the years before the war. In the old Roman world half the population were slaves, but three-fourths of our population are virtually slaves. For the man who marries and has children, who is forced into a slum, and is

once chained to the chariot of modern machinery, there is no escape. 'Man is born free,' declared Rousseau, 'and is everywhere in chains.' No chains of slavery were ever more degrading than those forged in our day. Systems of indoor sweating found for their antidote the pauper system of outdoor relief. England, that struck the shackles off the African slaves, forged shackles for her own children. The conditions of the modern slaves are in a sense worse than that of the Roman serf. For the Roman slaves often laboured in noble toil, building temples which have defied the corroding power of time and which still inspire the heart with admiration and awe. But these slaves of to-day build nothing that endures. The cities of their labour might perish to-morrow, but in their perishing no beauty would disappear from the earth. The very efforts which the toilers have made to improve their state have been movements of blindness and folly. They have organised far-reach-

ing systems by which they seek through the limitation of output to improve their condition. The gate through which they press towards deliverance is the gate of dishonesty. That is the proof of the servitude not of body only, but of mind and spirit, to which they have been brought. 'I do not hesitate to express 'the opinion,' wrote Huxley in 1890, 'that if there is no hope of a large improvement in the condition of the greater 'part of the human family; if it is true 'that the increase of knowledge, the winning of a greater dominion over nature 'which is its consequence, and the wealth 'which follows upon that dominion, are 'to make no difference in the extent and 'the intensity of want with its concomitant physical and moral degradation 'amongst the masses of the people, I 'should hail the advent of some kindly 'comet which would sweep the whole 'thing away as a desirable consummation.' Since then, wealth has enormously increased, science has triumphed more and

more over nature, but the increase of the one and the triumph of the other have only produced an increase of physical and moral degradation on the part of masses of the people. Whoever ponders the two Reports in which for the first time that degeneration is fearlessly and mercilessly exposed, cannot any longer be blind to that. It is not, however, by means of a 'kindly comet' that the arrest comes. For God's judgments shut not the door against hope.

V

In the days of old a prophet surveying the decay of Israel used a phrase which grips the heart: 'They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity,'¹ and so has visualised our pitiful state also. It is not, however, quite the same. For Zion was the temple, and stood for the hunger of the soul. We no longer build any temples. We build factories and playhouses and endless miles of grey and colourless

¹ Micah iii. 10.

streets. To-day the prophet would vary the words, 'They build up theatres and cinemas with blood and London with iniquity.' That is near the truth. London has been built up by that iniquity which has made the home-counties of England waste; and the life-blood of islands and fair valleys and hill-sheltered glens has been drained that Glasgow might grow and its slums be enlarged. The call to repentance which comes to our ears is a call summoning us to right the wrong wrought by blinded politicians, to restore again to the people the decencies of life and the possibilities of happiness. The call to national repentance is not a call to emotion but a call to action. Of old prophets summoned a race fast hurrying to decay to return to God. The way of return was the way of action. They were exhorted to people the waste places, to curb licentiousness, and to walk in the path of righteousness. And to-day the call of national repentance is the same.

It is the call to the realisation of an ideal of life in which masses of the people will not be damned from birth by a social organism in whose grip they are powerless. All in vain does a mission, appealing to the soul, feeble of help, wage conflict in a slum with the forces of the State, wielded through a dozen public-houses, that depress and enslave. As things now are there can be no escape and no salvation for the man in the slum.

CHAPTER V

THE LORD OF THE SLUM

HE stood at the corner of a terrace that opens off the steep street that leads from the heart of the high-perched city right down to the sea. With his right hand he gripped the paling, while he swayed gently from side to side. A big, burly, swarthy man with a close-cropped black beard, he sawed the air with his left hand, while he glanced with bleared eyes down the street. From the bottom of the steep a car came lumbering up, and a gleam of intelligence came into his eyes. He let go his hold on the paling, and made for the tram lines. He plainly wanted to board the car, but his feet moved in contrary directions, and on the pavement he described an arc. And he

lurched back on the paling, gripping it this time with both hands, while the car with its freight of passengers went clanking past up the steep. There, with helpless limbs, with his head bowed on his breast, he held on to the paling, while the sunlight flooded the firth with molten silver—the product of an ancient civilisation and a thousand years of Christianity. In that remote era which ended in August 1914 we would have passed him there without so much as a feeling of surprise. But to-day we are as a man awakened from heavy slumber, stung by a sudden dart to a new realisation. And we saw not that one solitary man sunk in his sodden degradation, but the multitude which he represents, that multitude whose drunkenness means destruction to their brothers wrestling in the trenches with an unbeaten and ruthless foe. Two years ago the call went ringing through the Empire, and from the far North-West to the long wash of Australasian seas

an indomitable race arose to war for the right. Statesmen and preachers summoned them to a holy war, and they came with transfigured eyes. But, alas! a holy war can only be waged by a holy nation. And as the eyes gaze at that figure swaying on the paling, and on the mind there flashes the realisation of what lies behind him, the heart can but cry in deepest awe: May God have mercy upon us!

I

There can come no moral resurrection for any except to those who realise the evil of which they are partakers. It is not in the spirit of Pharisaic censoriousness that we must judge that brawny workman swaying on the paling, and all that he represents. For these men are what we made them. It is the nation in its corporate capacity that shaped and moulded these lives after that pattern. If we had set ourselves expressly to produce this result, we could

not have taken a surer way of attaining the end. We drove the people into the congested and foul tenements of narrow streets. Let the well-to-do classes try to realise the conditions of life to which men such as this have been doomed. Let them picture to themselves what life can be like in a one-roomed or two-roomed house in a crowded barracks. Imagine a man and wife with an infant and two or more children, and often a lodger, living in such a house. For them there is no change of air either day or night; their bodies cannot be cleaned nor their clothes washed; they are denied cleanliness in their whole environment; it is impossible to cook appetising food or to serve it in a pleasing manner; there is no escape for them from noise and squalor; they have no privacy either living or dying; and there is always the spectre of want hovering near.¹ What recompense has

¹ In the *Record*, the official organ of the United Free Church of Scotland, there appeared in the August number,

the State provided for them in their misery? What provision has been made that men and women may escape for a little to breathe a purer air and feel that they have part in a life richer than this? The State has not been wholly unmindful of them. It has provided for them the public-house, and, with paternal care, has multiplied these places of

1916, a letter written by a 'Special Constable' which gives a terrible word-picture of a slum family:

'Let me give a personal experience of one of the multitude of family tragedies directly due to drink which come under my notice. A family of eight persons—four of them adults—occupied a single room in a slum area.

'The eldest son, aged twenty-one years, was in the last stage of consumption, and occupied the only bed in the room. On visiting the house one morning, I found the lad lying on the floor, in a corner. He had required to vacate the bed for his mother, and during the night there had been born into these surroundings another of those immortal souls who, in the words of Kingsley, "are damned from their birth."

'The following day the mother was sitting at the fireside, and was never back in bed till the son died some days later. It is hardly necessary to add that the mother, the infant, and another girl followed him at short intervals. On the day of the mother's funeral the husband got drunk and had to be locked up—the twentieth-century method of remedying evils of this kind.'

recreation and happiness where the mass of human misery is greatest. The State has been lavish in its provision. In the Cowgate of Edinburgh it has provided one public-house for every 200 of the population, though in the leisured and rich districts there is only one licence for every 1300 of the population ;¹ in the Cowcaddens of Glasgow it has provided at the rate of thirty public-houses to the half-mile. It surrounds the poor and the miserable with an atmosphere reeking with alcohol. The trade in alcohol enfeebles the will, saps the resisting power, and then trades upon that enfeebled will.

¹ The distribution of licences in our cities is a crying evil. The following are examples of the provision made in the wards of Edinburgh:—

Ward.	Population.	Number of Licences.	Population to each Licence.
Morningside .	24,320	18	1351
Merchiston .	24,436	21	1163
St. Giles' .	24,277	118	205
St. Andrew's .	11,166	87	128

In proportion to the poverty and misery of the population are the licences increased. In the Cowgate of Edinburgh there are 12 licences, and in the Canongate, 19. The same proportion applies to all our cities.

This is the door of escape from misery which the State provides. Who can blame the people for availing themselves of this national remedy for their woe pressed upon them by the State at every corner? If the drunkenness of masses of the population be a national weakness and a crying scandal, it is not their fault. It is the State that is responsible, and as citizens of the State we have each to bear our share of the responsibility and of the shame. It is no use decrying publicans and brewers, for these are only what we ourselves made them. Let us take ourselves to task and condemn our own folly and our own sin.

It was not enough that we provided the narcotic of drunkenness for the man, but we set ourselves to alleviate also the lot of the woman. There was a pressure of public opinion which prevented respectable women from frequenting public-houses. Provision had to be made for them. This provision was made in the legislation of Mr. Gladstone in

1860 and 1861 whereby grocers were licensed to sell alcohol. It is only fair to say that the purpose of the legislation was not to encourage the consumption of alcohol. In those days people were obsessed with the idea that by multiplying the opportunities for procuring alcohol, its consumption would decrease! The grocer's licence was to safeguard people from the public-house! The result has been the most disastrous of any legislation passed by sane statesmen. It enabled women to obtain alcohol in a respectable manner, sanctioned both by legislation and society, and to use it under conditions of privacy, unhampered by any restraint. The State enormously increased the facilities for drunkenness and strengthened the forces of temptation by the multiplying of tens of thousands of liquor-selling establishments. To these temptations the women in ever-increasing numbers succumbed. When war broke out, and the men mustered to the defence of their country, the

women were left the comfort of alcohol. The result was an increase in the drunkenness of women, and a corresponding increase in child mortality.

Who can blame these women? With their husbands and sons summoned to wrestle with death, what wonder that 'feelings of faintness' overtook them, and that for those feelings they resorted to the only unfailing remedy they knew—alcohol! These women live their lives under conditions which make it impossible for them ever to be well. They climb up and down weary stairs endlessly. There is no escape from hopeless toil. The unhealthy conditions of life render them chronic invalids. In the grocer's shop the State provides for them the panacea. Here is exhilaration amid the worries of their drab existence, and escape from the anxieties which oppressed them. And in a little while they are slaves to the national remedy provided for them. Their husbands often come back on leave to find

their homes ruined—the larder empty, the fire dying for lack of fuel, the children unkempt and ill-nourished. In many districts the allowances made by the State to the dependants of its fighting men were but a further State-endowment of the publican. It was for this that our soldiers bared their breasts to the foe and looked death in the face. This was the reward of their sacrifice, the guerdon of their wounds. In their absence the State provided for their wives the solace and stay of alcohol; but the State heeded not the fact that by so doing it ruined the home and destroyed the children. If there be condemnation, let the State be condemned; and from that condemnation for us, as its citizens, there can be no escape.

II

When we consider the results of the trade in alcohol, the wonder grows how it is that this State-regulated monopoly

for the manufacturing of paupers, lunatics, and criminals has been suffered to continue so long. To it most of the evils which afflict the body-politic can be traced. It nullifies all efforts at social improvement. Philanthropic movements have poured out money like water to improve the condition of the people, but faster than slums can be cleared away or emptied, new slums are created and filled by the victims of alcohol. The funds of Guardians and of Parish Councils are mainly used to support those whom alcohol has impoverished. There is the authority of Mr. John Burns, the late President of the Local Government Board, for the statement that out of 100,000 applicants for poor relief at Wandsworth during a period of twenty years, only twelve were abstainers. . . . It not only fills our workhouses, it also crowds our jails. According to the late Lord Alverstone nine-tenths of the crime of this country was due to drink. . . . Insanity finds in it a fruitful source.

Twenty per cent. of all the men and ten per cent. of all the women in a London County Council asylum—the Claybury Asylum—have become insane through alcohol. . . . The social evil is mainly due to alcohol. Under its influence women descend to vice. Half the infections of the social disease are traceable to the weakening of the will power by drink. . . . Evil though it be in itself, its evil goes far beyond itself, for it is the short-cut to all the other vices. . . . It is one of the great causes of the decline of the race in thus polluting the springs of life, poisoning and sterilising them; but, far more, it is responsible for an enormous share of the appalling infant mortality which destroys in many districts a fifth of the child life in the first year. . . . It lowers the vitality and makes the tissues more susceptible to attacks by the germs of disease, and thus greatly increases the deathrate. . . . It multiplies coffins and empties cradles. . . . Were this one monopoly abolished

and the people delivered from the State-licensed temptations which are for ever inviting them to their ruin, almost all workhouses and jails would be closed and the nation delivered from the burden of pauperism and crime which weighs so heavily upon it. Yet the nation in the time of its greatest peril spends £180,000,000 a year upon the drink-traffic. This is the price which it pays for the lowering of its own vitality and for the weakening of its striking power. A government which connives at that cannot be a government that is waging war really in earnest. Shipping, food, coals, the railways, roads, and a host of men are in great measure sacrificed to a trade which weakens the nation in face of the enemy.

The favourite argument in support of the liquor trade is the argument that upholds the liberty of the subject. In a free country people must be free to destroy themselves if they so wish, that others may be free to use alcohol with-

out abusing it. If we are to aim at freedom, let us have a freedom worth while. At present the nation is not free to control or eliminate the greatest peril in our midst. We are entrusted with the administration of our schools and roads and gas and poor-rates, and we elect men who control these. But we elect nobody who controls alcohol. We have as citizens no say as to whether the grocer in the village will get a licence to corrupt our family life with alcohol, or whether the poor places be crowded with public-houses. That is in the hands of justices, and justices are created by a mysterious power behind politics. In a free country this power of planting down places for the sale of alcohol independently of the will of the people is an anachronism by which the poor are enslaved. When we speak of freedom let us consider this freedom—freedom for the children of the poor to grow up untempted. Let us remember that the race has now to depend mainly upon

the poor for its continuation and for its virility. A nation that will doom the rising generation to the atmosphere of gin and whisky round its cradles, seals its own doom. The children brought up in its atmosphere will deem alcohol not only inevitable but also desirable. They will be 'happy in the mire because they are not conscious of the slough.' The true liberty of the subject cannot mean racial destruction. . . . Recently a woman in a mean street in London went to the public-house with a sick baby in her arms. 'While she was there it died, but she stayed on drinking and holding the dead baby.'¹ That dead baby in the arms of its alcoholic mother in a public-house visualises the grim and terrible situation. It is the personification of all the millions of baby lives throttled to death by alcohol—of a race sinking to decay in its grasp.

¹ *The Drink Problem of To-day*, p. 182.

III

We must not, however, forget that the Government of this country, while the manhood of the race was perishing abroad, were not wholly indifferent to the welfare of childhood at home. When they found that ship-repairing and ship-building and the production of munitions were hampered and delayed by drunkenness, they adopted restrictions of various kinds. But in most cases these restrictions were worse than useless. The Government surrendered its powers in the matter of the greatest evil afflicting the nation, to a Board of Control. That authority meant well. It sought to limit the consumption of alcohol by limiting the hours of its sale. This Board forgot that a man can in five minutes buy enough whisky to keep him comfortably alcoholic for five months. To shut the public-house for certain hours meant for many the laying in of a store of whisky when formerly a few

nips sufficed. But no regulations made by man since the day of the Bourbons equalled in sheer fatuity the decree that a man who wanted a gill of whisky could not get it unless he bought a quart? With a wage that passed his rosiest dreams, to secure the gill he of course bought the quart. No wonder the consumption of alcohol increased to £181,959,000 in 1915, as compared to £164,453,000 in 1914. This was the fruit of a policy which aimed at producing sobriety.

But there are some good results claimed by the Board of Control. The number of convictions for drunkenness decreased! But what was the price paid for this improvement in our streets? It was the greater corruption of the home. The drinking was driven out of the public-house into the house; the drunkard no longer offended the public gaze in the street, he carried his vice and degradation into the bosom of his family. Formerly his drunkenness was limited by certain hours; now his drunkenness was

continuous while his store lasted. And he took care it lasted. If the streets were partially cleansed, the children were impregnated as never before by the atmosphere of alcohol, and the women were taught to share in the drunken orgy. To-day the claim is made that, at last, the consumption of alcohol is on the decline. When four millions of men are with the colours, fighting across the seas, it would be indeed marvellous if there was not a decline in the sale of alcohol at home !

IV

If some of the steps taken by the Central Control Board cannot commend themselves to temperance reformers, there have been other policies initiated by them which are undoubtedly in the right direction. The prohibition of the sale of ardent spirits within certain areas has inaugurated a new and beneficial national policy. The time may not yet come for a total prohibition of alcohol throughout the country.

Those who know anything of the intolerable conditions under which men and women live in the crowded, noisome tenements of our great cities, realise that these people must have some way of escape from their miserable environment. Total prohibition is the ideal to be kept steadily in view, but before that ideal can be realised the people must be prepared for it. The only way to prepare for the ideal is by a reconstruction of the social order. New and sanitary housing for the poor must precede the policy of total prohibition. But the time is fully ripe for a prohibition of ardent spirits during the war and during the period of demobilisation. And it is on this policy that the Board have launched forth. In the district of Annan and in wide stretches of the north of Scotland the sale of spirits is now prohibited. In a recent visit paid to the Hebrides, I found among the people a spirit of thankfulness that they have at last been delivered from a great evil. Drunkenness has vanished among them.

A new era of prosperity has been inaugurated.

This policy, which has been made effective in the places where it has been put in force, ought to be at once applied generally. It is grotesque to endeavour to promote sobriety in patches, shut in by geographical boundaries. It has not been applied in the places which need it most. In the common lodging-houses and farmed-out houses of the Grassmarket and West Port of Edinburgh there were found, by a recent census, a population of 1383 persons of whom 518 were engaged in war-work, It is futile to expect that these workers, living in an atmosphere reeking with alcohol, can render the State the best service they are capable of. And to these places come, every week-end, workers from the naval base and soldiers on leave. And these workers and these soldiers pass their brief holiday in that alcoholic atmosphere. The result can only be deleterious to them and to the State.

There are more sailors and soldiers to be

found in the poor places of Edinburgh and Glasgow than in all the villages of the West of Scotland put together. Why should the few be protected from the sale of ardent spirits and the many left to be victims of temptation? There is only one remedy—the general application to the country of that policy which is now restricted to favoured areas. There must be equal treatment for the whole country and an equal chance given to all who are serving the State.

The time to make that policy effective is *now*. While the nation is in the midst of the great conflict for its existence, the people will gladly welcome any restrictions which will strengthen the State in its hour of need. The heart of the nation is prepared for sacrifice. But when the danger is passed, the mood will change. It will not be so easy then to make drastic changes in the habits of the people. And the time when restrictions will be most necessary will be when the army is demobilised. If restrictions are not

imposed now, it will be impossible to impose them then.

There is a growing feeling that the quickest road to the desired end may be found in the nationalisation of the liquor trade. Many would shrink from this policy if they thought that the State would become a permanent species of glorified publican. But the end in view is the transformation of the liquor trade. Only the State can achieve that. The State, with full control, can make the public-houses centres of recreation, with the temptation of spirits removed. And the way will be clear for mending or ending, as experience will prove which is the better policy. The true reformer will care far more for the reform than for the means by which it is to be achieved. If the reform can best be realised through State-ownership, then the sooner it comes the better.

If the remedy for the evils wrought by drunkenness does not, and cannot, lie along the road of supplying more

facilities for the sale of alcohol, we must at the same time never forget that the craving for alcohol is a craving for a fuller life—for life lit up by colour and social joy. Those who meet that hunger for a richer life with nothing but a dreary 'don't,' with no remedy save that of the surgical operation, expose themselves to jibes such as that bitter jibe of Lord Macaulay: 'The Puritans objected to bear-baiting not because of cruelty to the bear but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.' The aim of the social reformer must be the substitution of true joy and happiness for what is spurious. The State must make provision for the social instincts of the masses. 'What are wanted,' writes Sir Thomas P. Whitaker, a member of the Royal Commission on Licensing, 'are places of the nature of free clubs, where men may sit and smoke and talk and play games or read the papers. They should be open to the public free, with small charges for the use of cards and the billiard-

tables. . . . People should be made to feel as much at their ease in them as they are in our public parks. The cost of maintaining such places would not be great, and the social, material, and moral advantages that would result would render them an excellent investment. . . .' It is along this road deliverance must be sought. There is no use sweeping out the house unless the house is to be occupied by fairer and more wholesome tenants than those expelled.

V

There is one last serious aspect of this problem wherewith the spiritual forces of the nation are faced, and that is the weakening of the nation's soul which the new policy has entailed. Whosoever considers the manner in which religion has lost its grip on the masses, the passing away of all discipline, the decay of idealism, and the slow but steady emptying of the churches, cannot but feel that the greatest need of to-day is a revival of

religion. Unless the soul controls the body, man atrophies and perishes. The Church for many centuries has striven to garrison the nation's soul, and to bring the body under discipline. But the Church no longer can bring its power into play, for the churches are left deserted more or less. The proportion of the industrial population who never enter a church's door is vastly greater than is commonly supposed. Professor Cairns, a careful and judicious observer, who would make no statement that could not be verified, has declared that three out of five soldiers at the front have had no connection with the Church. The toilers of our cities are rapidly relapsing into that paganism out of which Christianity rescued the world at the first. What the world needs is God. It is only when the face of God is unveiled to the awe-filled eyes of men that they can realise the foulness of moral degradation. In the light of that holiness which marshals all the forces in

the universe to war against sin, and in that light alone, does the soul realise the awfulness of sin. When that realisation comes, then the history of the world becomes mainly the history of sin—that dread power which saps the vitality of nations, disintegrates empires, ruins civilisations, and which brings upon proud capital cities the flaming judgment of sword and fire. The function of the prophet is to keep clear before the eyes of men the moral issues which are laden with life or death. The mission of the Church is to replace the spurious and fleeting joys of sin by the true and enduring joy of a life in unison with God.

But the State renders the Church impotent and makes the revival of religion in our day impossible. That may seem exaggerated, but it is true. For the State has driven alcohol into the homes, and has consigned not only the husband, but often the wife also, to the degrading influence of alcohol not only on Saturday but on Sunday. In vain does the call

to return to God sound in the ears of a population sunk in the torpor of alcohol. No prophet can rouse such a people. 'If a man, walking in a spirit of falsehood, do lie, saying, "I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people." ' ¹ The Church is powerless against thirty public-houses to the half-mile! Alcohol bars the door against every movement for the social and spiritual uplift of the nation. If the nation is to be saved, the nation must act. Arise, O Israel!

We must look at our population in a new light and see them not as makers of munitions but as sons of God. The horribly cynical attitude of our rulers is that which regards men merely as munition-makers. They survey them only from the low ground of self-interest. It is not in relation to the peril of the hour that this problem has to be faced, but in relation to man's high calling as

¹ Micah ii. 11.

the son of God. These men and women are our brothers and sisters, bearing the image of God, and created to be heirs of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled. Can we go on working their ruin, damning them body and soul? A race that will not cleanse the fountains of its national life, that will not remove from its midst the forces of degeneration, that shrinks from that moral surgery which will alone save the body-politic—such a race cannot hope to go on swaying the destinies of the world. But this is our confidence, that through the horrors of war the nation will waken to the deep issues of life and death, and that the forces of moral and social renewal will advance a hundred years in one day. We can hear the marshalling of the forces in our midst which will transform and enrich the nation. There is arising the cry of the coming victory :

‘The King shall follow Christ, and we the King.’

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT REFUSAL

FOR the historian of the future who may essay the task of elucidating the moral progress or decay of the British Empire, one date will stand forth as a landmark—April 20, 1915. For it was on that day that the House of Commons refused to follow ‘the King’s lead.’ On the 6th April it was announced that ‘By the King’s command no wines, spirits, or beer will be consumed in any of His Majesty’s houses after to-day.’ No announcement ever cheered the heart of a nation more than that. It was as if an electric current had suddenly passed through an inert mass, galvanising it into life. When Lord Kitchener and other leaders loyally followed the King’s example, the men who fought

a weary battle for the emancipation of the nation from the yoke of alcohol, and whose hearts were oft sickened by long-delayed hopes, felt that the day of moral victory had dawned at last. The nation, delivered from the enemy within its gates, would bring its full power to bear upon the enemy that threatened its destruction from without. In house and mess and restaurant alcohol was banished. But all these fair hopes were rudely shattered when the House of Commons at the end of fourteen days refused to banish alcohol from the precincts of Westminster. The dawn of hope ended once more in gloom.

I

It is only as yet possible to surmise as to the forces which led to the great refusal. The nation, with the almost unanimous voice of its wisest and best citizens, had called for the deliverance of the people from alcohol by its total prohibition. Employers of labour, who

had no sympathy originally for the prohibition movement, were converted to it by the spectacle of the nation's marshaling of its forces being steadily hampered by drunkenness. The leaders of all the Churches pressed for it; the Press began to plead for it; Mr. Lloyd-George openly declared that 'drink is doing us more damage than all the German submarines put together'; and there is no doubt but that the King and Lord Kitchener expected that their example would give an impetus which would carry prohibition to victory. But the House of Commons shattered that hope. The forces of reaction immediately began to raise their head, and to the tables of the home and the mess alcohol slowly returned to resume its fell sway. The nation that had braced itself for social surgery was presented with soothing medicine in the form of the Central Control Board.

Though it is impossible to assign causes to these effects with certitude, yet it is safe to say that this failure was the

fruit of the party system. We have seen how the play of political parties one against the other devastated the countryside. The party politicians think primarily of votes, and anything that would cost them votes is banned. They knew in what peril the nation stood before the war, but they did not summon the nation to prepare for war and endure hardness. That would have been unpopular—and would have cost votes. They kept the nation in ignorance of its peril, and cowered before the people whom they kept in the dark, terrified to use firmness lest the firm hand on the reins should mean their unseating. They went further : when Lord Roberts warned the State in prophetic terms, they held him up to derision. The greatest calamity that ever befell the human race we owe to the party politicians.

Behind the party politician there is the caucus, and behind the caucus the party funds. The power of money is proverbial, and behind the party politician

is the exchequer supplied by his supporters. That exchequer is replenished by the sale of honours. When Cleander, a Phrygian and erstwhile slave, was the minister of the Emperor Commodus, Rome saw the woeful spectacle of the rank of Consul, of Patrician and of Senator exposed to public sale. We hold the decencies of life in too high regard to do that. Secretly and decorously our senatorships and the ancient orders of our knighthood are assigned. At one end of the social scale national degeneracy makes the trader in alcohol a plutocrat; at the other end the same national degeneracy makes him a legislator and a pseudo-aristocrat. The alcoholic trade was too wise to be on terms of friendship with one party alone; it sought relationship with all. Nobody can object to the man who pays the piper calling the tune. In Ireland the publican is even a greater power in politics than he is in England. And the power behind the politicians brought all its forces into play. When, in 1887, Lord Iddesleigh,

superseded at last, fell dead in Lord Salisbury's waiting-room, the latter, writing to Lord Randolph Churchill, exclaimed, 'As I looked upon the dead man before me I felt that politics was a cursed profession.' And Lord Salisbury knew.

The party politician, even in the maelstrom of a world's devastation, pursued his familiar course. Before the war he failed to warn the nation and to prepare. In the midst of the war he still strove to keep the nation in the dark. After months of calamities the nation was told that all was going well, and the people were obsessed with the idea that final victory was at hand. If the people only knew their peril they would have made any sacrifice for their country and their homes. But they were not told. And the party politician shrank from demanding or enforcing a sacrifice which the nation did not realise to be necessary because of its ignorance. The policy of pusillanimity pursued before the war was still regnant. The politicians who shrank

from demanding sacrifice in peace, shrank from demanding it in war. They did not know the heart of the nation. There was no sacrifice the nation would have shrunk from, if the demand were made. The nation knew that it needed discipline, and it asked for discipline, but asked in vain. And to-day the same pusillanimous policy sacrifices prohibition to the fear that the munition-workers might give trouble. They knew not, and they know not, the heart of this nation. But the fact remains that to-day the nation is spending 180 millions or so a year on alcohol, while the Government calls on the people to exercise the greatest economy that the war may be waged to the end. It is a sad and strange spectacle.

II

It was fortunate for the cause of the world's freedom that there was found in Europe a great nation which was not under the sway of party politicians.

The German Emperor is reported to have said that the next great European war would be won by the most sober nation. When the war began and the Tsar issued his great rescript abolishing vodka the Emperor is said to have exclaimed, 'But who could have foreseen this wonderful coup!' Some day it will doubtless be the accepted fact that the deliverance of the Russian nation from the degenerating power of alcohol won the war. For through that great act of a statesman's prevision the Russian Empire experienced a resurrection from the dead.

The statesmen of Russia knew the evil effects of alcohol. It was to vodka that they mainly owed the defeat and humiliation of the Japanese war. The manhood of Russia could not be rapidly mobilised owing to the grip of alcohol on the race; and the operations were ever hampered by its fell power. When the Russian Empire was called upon to fight for its life, the Emperor resolved that this time it would fight unfettered.

The sale of vodka was temporarily suspended, and the armies were mobilised with rapidity and precision. Misery and poverty were banished from the villages. The doss-houses and jails were emptied. A great nation resolved to fight with all its vigour. Though vodka constituted a State monopoly, and though Russia drew from it an enormous revenue, yet that revenue was unhesitatingly sacrificed. 'We cannot,' said the Tsar before the war, in a proclamation to his people, 'make our fiscal policy dependent upon the destruction of the spiritual and economic powers of many of my subjects.' On August 22, 1914, the Tsar issued an order that all vodka and other spirit shops should be closed till the end of the war. When the beneficial results of this policy were fully realised the Tsar made a final decision. 'I have decided,' he announced, 'to abolish for ever the Government sale of vodka in Russia.' Russia was thus finally delivered from the greatest of its enemies—the enemy

that destroyed its homes. And Russia has accepted its deliverance with a joyful heart. At first M. Bark, the Finance Minister, was 'staggered when prohibition was suggested.' After six months' experience of its results he declared: 'If I proposed to reopen the vodka shops there would be a revolution.' Thus was effected the greatest social reform in the history of the world. 'Since China proscribed opium,' was the verdict of a *Times* editorial, 'the world has seen nothing like it. We have been well reminded that in sternly prohibiting the sale of spirituous liquors, Russia has already vanquished a greater foe than Germany.'

And so it proved. Through vanquishing alcohol Russia found a power which is now vanquishing Germany. On eyes cleared from the fumes of vodka there rose the vision of God. The Russian went forth tying his knapsack on his back as one who took up the Cross. They endured defeats which might have

overwhelmed them, but they were unconquerable. Through hardships and privations undreamed of the Russian soldier retained his health and fighting power. Though he often confronted the enemy with no weapon but his bare breast, he never despaired. Wounds which in other campaigns would have been inevitably fatal, healed, and life conquered death. Though oft deprived of sufficient food, he endured fatiguing marches, and in the midst of the nervous strain of defeat and retreat he remained cheerful, determined, and confident of victory. At last, with 'firm faith in the clemency of God,' the Russian hosts turned at bay and stood fast. When the clouds were darkest, it was as if the sun broke forth when the news was flashed through the world that the Russians had stormed Erzerum. To-day Armenia is freed, and the great surge of the Russian hosts is rolling west. For the Russians knew that a holy war could not be waged by a drunken nation ;

and in the power of self-sacrifice they have snatched victory from what seemed irretrievable defeat. While Britain continued to sacrifice its strength and its wealth at the shrine of alcohol, while the wives and the children of the men who were fighting and dying were left to the comforting of publicans, while the munition-workers were hindered and marred by the lure of strong drink, while the best of the manhood of the British race called in vain for deliverance from the yoke of the national bondage, Russia in the might of a great renunciation was gathering its forces and advancing to victory. Autocracy has delivered Russia from the bondage of centuries; democracy has surrendered its power to the party politician, and the party politician has kept Britain still enslaved.

III

It would be difficult to overestimate the evil consequences for the future of

the race which will inevitably ensue from the great refusal. Let me endeavour to make clear one of these evil consequences. Had the House of Commons on April 20th of last year resolved to follow the King's lead, instead of spurning it; had it made that lead effective, what would have been the result? One effect would have been that to-day we would have had an army delivered from the bane of alcohol. The King's officers and the men who wear his uniform would have followed the King's example.

It is the commonplace of much of the speaking from religious platforms that we are to have a new era inaugurated when the men come back from the war. The religious life of the nation is going to be quickened; its moral forces are to be vastly strengthened; there is to be a new earth when the war is over—if not a new heaven. These hopes are, however, doomed to disappointment. It is not the ranks of those who are striving for temperance that will receive

reinforcement when the great army comes home.

Let any one who thinks that we are on the verge of a great social or religious revival consider the facts. (The difficulty is that we fail to face facts and delude ourselves with vain imaginings.) The great fact to which we blind ourselves is that the manhood of the nation, for the first time in its history, has been brought into the atmosphere of alcohol, and acclimatised to that atmosphere to the number of between four and five millions. In that remote period before August 1914, the British army was a volunteer force mainly recruited from 'the adventurous and the derelict.' The recruiting area was largely the congested wards of our great cities. The men who enlisted did so, in the great majority, after they had already acquired a taste for the exhilaration of alcohol. It was in the circumstances expedient that in the canteen provision should be made, under military supervision, for their being supplied

with a purer alcohol than the public-houses provided. The results were beneficial rather than otherwise.

The strange thing, however, is that the canteen system which was necessary for the small voluntary army should have also been imposed by the Army Authorities upon the full manhood of the nation when they sprang to arms in defence of King and country. Though no trainer would ever allow the use of alcohol by those preparing for any athletic sport, though the man who would excel at football or racing or boxing or shooting, as a first step eschewed all alcohol, the Government of this country provided alcohol as an integral part of every camp where the heroic of the race set themselves to endure hardness. 'The greater
' endurance of the non-alcoholic soldier or
' worker is now not a matter on which
' there can be or is any difference of
' opinion.'¹ For the youth of the nation,

¹ Lieut.-Colonel Woodhead, M.D., LL.D, *The Drink Problem*, p. 79.

wearied with the hardness of unwonted exercise, away from the influence of mothers and loved ones, warned by the Secretary of State for War against alcohol, the Government provided the narcotic of alcohol. Millions came within the sphere of its baneful influence who never would have been so exposed in days of peace. And not only so, but though it has been scientifically established that alcohol lowers the vitality, a paternal Government, in the mud and misery of the trenches in Flanders, provided for each soldier the sustenance of rum, though from such a stimulus no benefit could accrue. 'Small doses of alcohol . . . ' cause . . . a distinct flushing of the ' skin due to dilation of the cutaneous ' capillaries, the skin becoming first warmer ' and the blood in the internal organs ' cooler than before the alcohol was taken. ' After a time the skin temperature falls, ' but there is no corresponding increase of ' temperature of the blood in the internal ' organs. This means that the body has

‘ lost heat by the skin. The evaporating
‘ moisture of wet putties and stockings
‘ carries away a further amount of heat,
‘ whilst the contracting wet materials
‘ exerting pressure on the lower limbs,
‘ after a time tend to compress vessels in
‘ the skin, and especially to interfere with
‘ the return of venous blood and lymph
‘ to the larger veins and lymph channels.
‘ The lowered temperature and the im-
‘ paired nutrition due to this obstructed
‘ circulation together are accountable for
‘ the “trench foot.” . . . A man is not
‘ at his best, whether working or fighting
‘ against enemies or diseases, if he is taking
‘ alcohol. Lord Roberts knew this, and
‘ His Majesty the King, Admiral Jellicoe,
‘ and Lord Kitchener appreciate it. How
‘ soon will the nation realise it ? ’ ¹

The Government supplied the soldiers in the camp and in the trench with the means of decreasing their fighting efficiency. To the ‘ tot of rum ’ can be

¹ Lieut.-Colonel Woodhead, M.D., LL.D., *The Drink Problem*, p. 81.

traced a proportion of the cases of unstable nervous equilibrium which the war has produced. Men who were total abstainers, pledged Rechabites, and others were swept by a paternal Government into the ranks of those who derive from alcohol a false exhilaration. 'The national conscience,' writes Lieut.-Colonel Woodhead, 'has not yet been thoroughly aroused to the importance of the issues at stake—that in peace or in war intemperance is the link in the chain of our national life which gives greatest evidence of weakness and most cause for anxiety.' Against stupidity the gods themselves fight in vain. Though every laboratory worker and every physiological chemist tells us, with the cold precision of science, that alcohol is not a stimulant but a depresser, that the elation it produces is simply that of a narcotic, that it diminishes the energy and dulls the enthusiasm of man, that it leaves the mind and body more exhausted than before—yet the stupidity entrenched in high places cannot learn

the lesson. It trains the armies on alcohol; it seeks to sustain the embattled hosts with alcohol.

IV

The great refusal of April 20, 1915, meant that this national organisation for the training of the manhood of the race in the use of alcohol went on unhindered. Of all the products of the great war this is the most amazing. Let any one consider the situation and judge. In every camp and barracks the visitor will find the State-established monopoly of the canteen. The canteen is set up by the State, and the taxpayer provides the building, rent and rate and tax free, for the contractor, who runs the canteen. Abroad, the canteens are almost exclusively in the hands of one co-operative society, whose board of management is mainly composed of officers in the Service and some of them recently heads of regimental institutes. 'Clearly there is a great 'deal of "military" money invested in it.

‘ Surely it is not a good thing that a society
‘ of this kind should have the privilege of
‘ making a good deal of money out of
‘ supplies to the private soldier.’¹ What-
ever be the system of administering the
canteen, whether by the regimental officers
or by contractors, the fact remains that
behind the canteen are the resources of
the nation. And the contractors of the
canteen supply in some cases amusements.
‘ I know of a camp where the contractor
‘ supplied the singers, and not very desir-
‘ able ones either.’² Recreation is thus
used to encourage the consumption of
alcohol by the army.

While the taxpayer is thus behind
and supporting the canteen, the counter-
acting forces are left to the support of
the charitable. The Y.M.C.A. or Church
huts are there not by right but by favour,
and whatever attractions they provide
are provided by means of voluntary con-
tributions. The State provides the means

¹ A correspondent in *The Times*, April 22, 1916.

² *Ibid.*

of degeneration ; it is left to the voluntary effort of private citizens to provide the means of healthful recreation. It is truly a strange world.

Do the parents of the youth of this country realise the situation ? Henceforth every boy when he reaches the age of eighteen is drafted into a camp. And there the State makes provision for acclimatising him to the atmosphere of alcohol. To frequent the canteen is manly, and few will be able to resist. It means that by the million the future citizens of this country will acquire a liking for alcohol. They find there the door of escape from weariness and monotony, a false joy of life and a meretricious colour lighting up drab and grey days. Hitherto the youths of this country were protected by the slow evolution of beneficial restrictions. In Scotland the public-houses were shut on Sundays. The young men were protected on at least one day in seven. But when at the age of eighteen they put on the King's uniform that protection ceases.

The public-house is shut, but the canteen is open on Sunday. Not even on one day in seven is there protection from temptation for the youths of this country now conscripted. The fathers and mothers who give their sons to their country do not realise the provision a grateful country is making for darkening their souls by the fumes of alcohol. If they realised it, there would arise a demand before which even those who refused to follow their King would bow. Without that national demand there will be no escape from the consequences of the great refusal. Those who delude themselves with the hope that out of the great war will come a moral and religious revival will have a rude awakening. Out of the social conditions now upheld by a beneficent Government there cannot emerge any ethical revival. The ranks of those who have learned the narcotising benefit of alcohol and who will naturally turn to the same comfort, will be greatly multiplied.

V

Let me conclude with a personal experience. On a car in one of our great cities in this last summer, a man sitting beside me began a conversation. Though he was a stranger to me, he began to speak out of a heart sore distressed. His son had been home on leave. 'Every night he was at home he was under the influence of drink. Before he enlisted he did not know the taste of alcohol. . . . When he went away back, he was drunk leaving the station. . . . A few days later word came that he was killed. . . . The last we saw of him was his going away drunk. . . . His mother is in sore distress. . . . She is old-fashioned in her faith and she cannot get out of her mind the words that drunkards cannot enter the kingdom of God. What do you say?' Thus he spoke in disjointed sentences, palpitating with emotion. All I could say was that hell was not for such as his son, in my

opinion ; but that hell was essential for the due disciplining of those who maintained the conditions which made his son a drunkard. But how many are there to-day in this country like that poor father and mother ? They gave their all : this is their reward.

CHAPTER VII

THE SLUM IN THE MAN

THE misery which the slow evolution of urban and industrial civilisation has wrought in the crowded areas of our cities is manifest to the least observant eye. The pitiful condition of the man in the slum makes its clamorous appeal to the conscience of the race. But there is a condition even more pitiful. It is that of many of the dwellers in the spacious squares and terraces where the rich and the leisured are segregated. They are far removed from the slum where the miserable are massed; but they have created a slum in their own souls. And of the two, the condition of him whose soul is a slum is truly the more grievous.

I

They have everything that life can desire of material good. These houses stretching for miles in their regular uniformity are replete with appliances of luxury and comfort such as a Roman emperor might have sighed for in vain; every desire of their heart they have the power and the will to gratify;—and yet life is dreary. The people that ought to be supremely happy are on the whole miserable. They have reduced life to a series of sensations. But the dread spectre of satiety dogs the footsteps of the devotees of sense. If they were mere animals they would be perfectly happy. Their misery is that they are endowed with souls. And the starved soul will not let them rest.

What has pauperised the rich is this—they have lost the sense of God. Their fathers were saved from the tyranny of their senses by the fact that they kept open the window towards the

Infinite. But the growth of knowledge and the triumphs of science gradually shut that window, so that now scarce a glow of light penetrates to the dusty and dark recesses of the soul. The soul no longer thrills with the Divine; all the thrill they can know is that of gratifying the body. And that way leads only to the self-loathing of repletion. To escape from themselves they rush in clouds of dust along the roads, demanding 'speed in the face of the Lord.' But all in vain is a sated body hurled from London to Brighton, for at the end it is sated still.

With the shutting of the window towards the Infinite, all restraint vanished. So long as there remained a sense of a moral order in the universe which could only emanate from a Moral Governor, and so long as the soul felt that the way of life lay in conformity to the will of the Unseen Ruler, life was kept under control. The will never wholly relaxed its effort to keep the outgoings of life

in unison with God. But, then, there came the startling realisation that there was no God, or, if there was, that He was a mere negligible factor. The processes by which things came to be as they are could be explained; and because they could be explained, of course, God had nothing to do with them! God was steadily pushed further and further away. Back from a mythical Eden some five thousand years ago, He was pushed into the recesses of æons that made the brain reel to contemplate; away from a heaven which seemed quite near, He was removed far off into the abysses of heavens which had become astronomical. Everything could be explained—it was only a question of time when life would yield its secret. As the universe grew wider and wider there was in it no place for God. In that world which once He was deemed to have created, now He was superfluous. And the restraints which the thought of Him imposed were thrown to the winds.

History once more repeated itself. 'They treat it,' wrote Bishop Butler of religion in his day, 'as if . . . nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.' The dawn of the twentieth century found a generation which far outstripped the eighteenth. By its headlong plunge into the vortex of pleasure it was determined to avenge itself for the days when life was disciplined by the thought of the judgment-seat of God.

Alongside of this emancipation from the restraints of religion there was a singular development of interest in religious matters. Never were there so many books published regarding the sources of Christianity and the authenticity of that various literature which composes the Bible. And votaries went on incessantly tunnelling the great barrier which shuts us in from what lies beyond the visible, and they even heard,

as it were, the tapping of those who drove a tunnel to meet them. But all that activity was wholly divorced from that religion which is inherently spirit and life. It was the interest of the antiquarian in the earthen vessel which holds the treasure, not the interest of the soul in the treasure itself. The frame was the object of endless discussion and speculation, but the eyes were blind to the picture enclosed by the frame. They thought that they were engaged in the works of religion, while their work was as remote from religion as the labour of one who would set himself to expound the glory and wonder of art by explaining the texture of canvas and analysing the chemical components of paint. And, while the ancient documents were studied more and more under the microscope, the image of the Son of Man faded more and more before the eyes of men, and the ideal of love of duty was left as lumber under accumulating dust: religion had a place in the social

scheme, but the place was the museum of antiquities. It was no longer a power in life ; it had become a matter of mere historic interest.

II

The new atmosphere in which men lived made it impossible to present the Christian appeal to them as that appeal came home to the heart of humanity for nineteen centuries. For the life-blood of religion was ever the passion of love and gratitude evoked by the forgiveness of sin. But the sense of sin died in the heart, and a generation that knew not sin could only wonder at the meaning of a gospel which proclaimed the forgiveness of sin. No golden age lay behind when man was sinless ; there was no 'fall' from a high estate, and consequently no restoration was needed. The spiritual tale of man's first sin was a matter of mockery ; and the teaching of prophet and saint regarding iniquity was but 'an obsolete and fanatical

eccentricity.' Walt Whitman has given expression to man's new attitude:

'I could turn and live with animals, they are so
placid and self-contained,
I stand and look at them long and long;
They do not sweat and whine about their condition;
They do not lie awake in the night and weep for
their sins.'

Nothing was, in fact, further from the thought of the latter-day generation than to lie awake weeping for their sins. 'As a matter of fact,' writes Sir Oliver Lodge, 'the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment; his mission, if he be good for anything, is to be up and doing.' That is an absolutely correct diagnosis. So little does the 'higher man of to-day' worry about his sins that he sinks into the slough of animalism undisturbed by any thought of wrong. Having sacrificed every canon of Christian morality, he goes forth out of his house where the peace is unbroken by the clamorous voices of children, and

he pursues his mission of being 'up and doing'—directing his energies in White-chapel to keeping alive the children of the diseased and the miserable. This is the fine fruit of our 'higher man': having destroyed in his home that race whose product he is, unrepentant of his crime, he devotes himself to saving the race in the slum. His mission to be 'up and doing' savours of the slime—but he knows it not. His whole life is the proof that he has forgotten the meaning of iniquity, and that he is incapable of worrying about his sins.

In all the books wherein the life of to-day is portrayed there move men and women whose consciences are no longer troubled by the thought of any wrong. With a photographic accuracy Arnold Bennett has set forth the lives of men and women emerging from the gutter into ease and riches, but the world to which they attain is a world where the thought of God ceases to inspire or disturb. He indeed pauses in a moment of grim

satire to visualise a soul in the throes of realising sin. The heroine of three books, Hilda Lessways, shuts her ears to the call summoning her to her mother's bedside, only to find her dead when selfishness suffers her to arrive. From the house where her dead mother lies she goes to the station to meet a relative and comes face to face with a well-dressed epileptic. She watches him, almost shuddering. He stares at her with his epileptic eyes . . . and she rushes home a nervous wreck. 'She knew profoundly and 'fatally,' expounds Mr. Bennett, 'the evil 'principle which had conquered her so 'completely that she had no power left 'with which to fight it. This evil principle was sin itself. She was the sinner 'convicted and self-convicted. One of 'the last intelligent victims of a malady 'which has now almost passed away from 'the civilised earth, she existed in the chill 'and stricken desolation of incommutable 'doom.' Our author knows his world, and in that world only the sight of an epileptic

convinces of sin. And the realisation, as might be expected, only throws the victim more surely into the grip of sin. For that world knows no longer any God who saves from sin.

There is no ground left on which religion can appeal to the conscience of such a generation. In the eighteenth century Wesley and Whitefield sent through the decaying masses of England a vitalising breath as they proclaimed the joyful gospel of deliverance from sin, and men arose from the mire with lives transfigured. In our day religion can find no such approach and no such triumph. For like the whispering of an idle breeze is a proclamation of sin's forgiveness to those who know no sin. For us it is but a childish malady which we have long outgrown. The passion of sin forgiven will no longer thrill our souls.

III

And this life which our modern writers describe is one of appalling dreariness.

As the new generation grow in knowledge every ideal vanishes; as they move upward in the social scale they shut out God. The Chapel loses its power; men wear Wesley's clothes but know not his spirit. Arnold Bennett makes us see the dying epoch. He describes the whole town assembled in the market-square to celebrate the centenary of Sunday schools. The vast crowd sing 'Rock of Ages' and 'There is a Fountain filled with Blood.' The volume of sound is overwhelming. 'Look at it,' says Edwin Clayhanger to Hilda Lessways; 'it only wants the Ganges at the bottom of the square.' 'Even if we don't believe,' she replies, 'we needn't make fun.' And amid the singing crowd, mocked at and jostled, struggles Mr. Shushions, the oldest Sunday-school teacher in the Five Towns, who long ago had rescued the Clayhangers from the workhouse, but now had 'lived too long' and 'survived his dignity.' 'The impression given was that the flesh would be unpleasant and uncanny to the touch.' It is a grim

picture of an effete life still moving, mummified and repulsive, among men.

The old ideal was dead; but there was no ideal new-born. Life was dreary, but happiness was still pursued. When the family would move to the new house where science surrounded them with all the appliances of comfort and luxury, then Edwin Clayhanger was convinced he would find happiness. The day comes and they move to the new house. But that very morning there is a quarrel with his father. He had been ingenuous enough to believe that the new house somehow would mean the rebirth of himself and his family. 'Strange delusion! The bath-splashings and the other things gave him no pleasure, because he was saying to himself all the time, "There is going to be a row this morning. There is going to be a regular shindy this morning."' They come to the new house but they cannot sit down to dinner together.

'Father thinks I've been stealing his

damned money,' snaps out the son in a barking voice, and refuses to meet him at table. And the father takes his dinner alone. The end of the ghastly quarrel is that the son gets an increase of half a crown to his weekly wage! That is the measure of the 'new birth' which he had so fondly anticipated. He does not realise that after being emptied from vessel to vessel, however much larger and more beautiful the vessels become, filthy water remains filthy water still.

What is there left to those for whom the vision of God thus fades? The fathers amassed money, and they had the joy of conflict, and a sense of duty. But the sons have not the joy of conflict. They inherit houses built for them, and money for which they have not toiled. What are they to do? Their fathers found endless interest in Church and Chapel, and they gave of their wealth. The sons no longer believe in Church and Chapel. They have no traditions of social service. They regard the class from

which their fathers sprang with aversion and with fear. Their favourite topic of conversation is the shortcomings of the working-classes. One whole winter they denounced the iniquity of the State making any provision, however pitifully small, for the decayed veterans who fall out of the ranks of toil; another winter they declaimed with bitterness against the crime of the State making provision through insurance for the ill-health of their servants and employees! They have little taste for books, and money cannot buy the sense by which beauty floods the heart. There is nothing left them but self-indulgence. To that they sacrifice everything. Food and clothes and physical pleasure fill up the circuit of the days. Then weariness seizes them. They become the captives of boredom. They rush hither and thither. They carry to the Highlands a life which is intolerable in London; they bring back to London a life which is intolerable in the Highlands. They live lives isolated from the

joy and innocence of childhood — for that is the ideal they have made their own. They rush after anything which will promise the ‘easier and quicker passing of the impracticable hours.’ They still maintain some connection with the Church, but their attitude is that of patronage and not of allegiance. The preacher must be an echo of their voices or they will have none of him. There must be no preaching of stern duty or of judgment to come—that is antiquated! When they come to church there must be the gospel of soothing rest—fulsomely administered in a saccharine form! Religion must be a narcotic; its end that they may forget. But even then it must be in the smallest doses and at long intervals. Thus their places in church are getting emptier and emptier, and the day of worship saw their cars stand in serried rows by wayside inns. They have created for themselves a grey, dull world. ‘If they do abolish God from their poor bewildered hearts, all or most

‘of them,’ wrote Carlyle, ‘then will be seen for some length of time, perhaps for some centuries, such a world as few are dreaming of.’ And that is what they were fast doing when the thunder of the guns echoed doom. They were without God and without hope in the world.

To some this may appear an exaggerated and distorted picture. It may in fact be pointed out that in these last years there was a greater activity of social service directed towards the help of the poor and miserable than ever before. That is true. But it is true also that it was wholly ineffective. It was the activity mainly of ignorance. It was the throwing of half-crowns to the starving; it was not the giving of love. They gave charity; they did not give themselves. They acquiesced with hardly a protest in the social organisation which inevitably swelled the ranks of the poor and increased the burden of their misery. By that social organisation many of them profited. They gave doles; but it was

to pacify their poor consciences. They instituted 'charity organisation societies,' making charity as it were a deal on the Stock Exchange. If only they had thought of it they would have instituted a 'Divine Spirit Organisation Society.' The one would not be more irreverent than the other; for charity is the fruit of the Spirit. They were to have charity without the Spirit—so they adopted the methods of the market-place. By means of ledgers and visitors they were to separate the deserving poor from the undeserving. Their charity was to be directed towards the deserving. They forgot that there could not be such a thing as charity for the deserving—only justice! There was the noise of much machinery, but the noise was made by a handful. The rest gave only of their lucre. And all the time, while they studied the social problem and organised charity, the measure of human misery went on increasing. The rich grew richer and the poor grew poorer, amid the greatest activity of social

reformers. It was all futile because it was uninstructed. It only palliated the pain; it never sought to dry up the fountains of human misery. The professional charity organisers saw the human wrecks being borne on the flood to doom, and from the banks, in security, they threw them life-belts. But they never thought of plunging themselves into the wild waters and breasting the flood at the risk of their own lives that they might save. Man cannot save man without blood, and there was only water in their veins.

IV

That life manifested the slum at its core in sundry unmistakable forms. Its literature was largely the record of man wallowing in the mud; and that Art which aforetime made humanity kneel at the shrine of the Mother and the Child became the handmaid of vice. In the name of Art the new generation demanded freedom, but the freedom was a

freedom divorced from modesty and reverence. Only the play or the song that evoked the unclean laugh now crowded the theatre. But most striking of all was the manner in which they sought to escape from the ennui which afflicted their souls. Weird and vulgar dances had their day; grotesque attire claimed its devotees; but the chief way of escape was that which led to the feet of charlatans. A whole group of new religions sprang up; mysteries from the Ganges vied with mysteries imported from Chicago, and both found multitudes to seek after them. The growth of centuries, the slow evolution of truth handed down by the saintly and the wise—that was as nothing weighed against the dictum of a woman in America or a Hindu in Benares!

On a grey winter afternoon, some three years ago, I happened to arrive at one of our most beautiful cities—a city that justly prides itself on its culture. As I walked along the world's most beautiful street I was struck by the sight of a long

line of motors that overflowed up a roadway leading to the turreted hill. I asked a motor-man what was happening that day. 'There is a black prophet,' said he, pointing his thumb over his shoulder, 'preaching in the Assembly Hall.' I needed no further explanation. I know nothing about the said prophet except that he isn't a Christian. That was of course the secret of his power. Because he wasn't, the leisured and the cultured sat in serried ranks at his feet. Perhaps he would give them what they had lost—peace! And there came the memory of another civilisation sinking into decay when the mysteries of the Nile and the Orontes established themselves on the banks of the Tiber, and the weary citizens of Rome, sated by a world's luxury, deemed no charlatan emerging from the East too gross for acceptance or his mystery too incredible for belief. In the dawn of its decay Rome bestowed 'the freedom of the city on all the gods of mankind.' In

our day London and Edinburgh have followed along the same road. The God all-holy and loving, the All-Father—we have cast Him off. But no superstition is too mean for us to kneel at its shrine. History is truly a monotonous record. Nations and empires have all gone the same road to perdition. And they never knew they were treading it.

V

Such was the condition of the nation when the trumpet of judgment sounded and civilisation went reeling into the furnace. The slum-dwellers and the slum-infected were alike sinking back into paganism and the beast. For the time we have emerged from the greater horror of sin into the horror of war. But what is to happen after? Saved as by fire, are we to hug our slums again?

Surely it cannot be for the perpetuation on earth of life after this order, that five millions of men have arisen

and faced death. If we are to be worthy of the price that has been paid for our deliverance, by a resurrection from the dead we must cleanse our souls and transform our slums. It is not for us as we are, or for our cities as they now are built, or for a State that denies to its children the decencies of life, or for the continued reign of that plutocracy that has darkened the windows of the soul—not for the continuance of these have our brothers died right joyfully in the glory of their youth. It was for another England, another Scotland—the kingdom of the heart's desire wherein shall be found no more either the slum-dweller or the slum-lover—that they fought and died. When we think of them we know what the early Christians felt when they said one to the other, 'We are bought with a price; we are no longer our own to do as we like; we are His.' And we—we are *theirs*. We must be worthy of them. We dare not any longer leave their children in noisome slums; we dare not

any longer suffer our own lungs to inhale the vapours of the spiritual slum. To show that we are in some little measure worthy of the price paid for our life, paid for the Britain that shall be, we will arise and straightway rebuild—until our cities shall be the cities of God, and our straths and valleys shall be filled with the songs of happiness and love and praise. They will not then have died in vain!

CHAPTER VIII

BEHIND YOU IS GOD

THE greatest need of our day is the reinforcement of the soul. Our mistake has been that we thought the supreme good was the development of the brain. We went on steadily increasing our power over the forces of nature, but we neglected to develop the soul-power which could control and direct the material power thus created. The result has been the greatest catastrophe in history. The industrial civilisation which we reared through the painful toil of a century, is passing in the smoke of the howitzer shells. And the end is not yet. Unless man becomes master of himself, it can bring nought but misery that he should master nature. The war of the future will be war in the air. From the

experience of one or two air-craft raining destruction on a city one can imagine that dread future when thousands of air-ships and aeroplanes will rain bombs like hail on doomed cities. The old security of this sea-girt isle has vanished for ever. In the air there are no frontiers which can be fortified or guarded. Every fresh triumph of science will be only a new engine of destruction, a new weapon of devilry. Humanity will be driven underground, burrowing like rats. It is quite conceivable not only that civilisation should perish but that the world itself might be destroyed. The development of power, without the development of soul to control it, means ruin to mankind. The amazing thing is that men should to-day declare with passionate conviction that the future safety of England depends on the increase of that knowledge which has given us the poison clouds of chlorine gas, without ever a word to indicate that salvation can only come through the

development of self-mastery and self-control—even through the soul. We have stood for two years in the centre of the maelstrom of human history, and have heard the hurricane of judgment sweeping through the world, but as yet we have not heard the still, small voice of God.

I

The lesson we have to learn is that the power of the soul must be enforced. And that can only come by laying hold upon God. The power that ever lay behind human progress, that worked out law and order and security, has in all ages been the power of religion — of God. But religion has been in our day a matter of contempt. It was merely a 'grotesque, fungoid growth which clustered round the primeval thread of ancestor worship,' more or less a 'pathological phenomenon closely allied with neurosis and hysteria.' There are few things more pitiful in human weakness

than the contempt expressed by the scientist and the learned for that power of the soul which created the civilisation of which the contemners are the fine fruit !

Though religion has been contemned, yet it cannot be denied that those forces which create abiding races and powerful empires are the very forces which have never been found to exist apart from the sanctions of religion. The development of the Roman Empire was profoundly influenced by its religion. To religion virtue owed its power, and from it patriotism drew its inspiration. And that religion claimed a supernatural origin—the source of its might was in the Unseen. When religion became a matter of public ridicule and the gods an ‘object of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened,’ and the philosophers ‘concealed the sentiments of an atheist under their sacerdotal robes,’ then the restraints of morality were flung aside and Rome went headlong to ruin. It was the same in Greece ;

the same everywhere. All religions have issued their commands: 'And God spake all these words, saying . . .'. And so long as men felt the supernatural behind the mandate, they trembled and obeyed; when behind the mandate they discerned only superstition, they surrendered to their base desires. Morality can only be based on the Divine. Its commands are operative when these commands are recognised as those of the Moral Governor of the universe. If these commands do not affect issues beyond the grave, if they have no sanction in the eternal order, then there is no value in obeying them, and no crime in disregarding them. Rather is there a merit in flouting them—the mere products of ignorance and superstition. To despise them and disregard them was the mark of an emancipated and superior mind! Thus it ever came that first the supernatural vanished and afterwards morality vanished. And thus has it been also in our day.

The amazing thing is that men should

ever have been blind to this—that, however much God may hide Himself at the end of other avenues of approach, at the end of this He stands forth clear before our eyes. There is nothing predicated regarding God which we cannot doubt and deny save this, that there is operative in the world a moral order conformity to which means life and disobedience death. It is thus with individuals and thus with nations. Let a man surrender to evil, and instantly nature begins to marshal its forces against him and digs for him the grave. The road by which humanity has marched is marked by the ruins of empires and civilisations upon which destruction came through the very same laws that we see working to-day, if we choose to look. Whatever race or empire surrendered to the base, sacrificed purity to sensuality, the good of the common weal to its own selfish ends, made selfishness and pleasure its aim, upon that race or empire, sooner or later, fell the consuming sword and the

devouring flame. There is no sentence in all literature more pregnant than that which tells how the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. So it has been and ever will be. The whole forces of the universe are arrayed against evil, and carry on a ceaseless war against it. It is because of this divine surgery that humanity has been saved from a corruption which would have entailed the world's destruction. All history is the proof that there is a mandate which means life or death for individuals and nations. Along this road we can touch the hand of God and see the sword of His divine justice. Righteousness is the law of the world, the will of the Supreme Ruler who orders the universe that righteousness must at last prevail. The source of morality and all righteousness is—God.

II

It is manifest, then, that there is but one safety for individual or race, and

that lies in getting into line with the Moral Order of the world—with God. But the startling thing is that though we have come through a discipline such as no generation ever experienced before, at the end of two years of it there is no sign that we have learned our lesson. The measure of our blindness is that politicians summon the nation to cultivate its brains that it may be saved, without ever a hint that salvation lies along the road of character and morality—the road that leads to God. (If salvation lay in the brain, the Greeks would have saved the world, for theirs was the greatest brain-power ever developed on the earth.) And even the Church is uncertain, and fails to summon the nation with clear and uncertain sound back to God. For it is manifest that there can be no penitence where there is no consciousness of transgression. There can be no return except for those who realise that they have strayed.

The first step, then, back to God must spring from the soul wakened to the

realisation that it has sinned and that God is fighting against sin. But so far from the nation realising its true state, the amazing fact is that the nation is hypnotised with the sense of its own righteousness. It is only conscious of its own shining virtues. It has drawn the sword for freedom and in defence of little nations. It is waging a 'holy war.' Self-blinded, unable to believe that virtues such as shine on its face could suffer repulse, in days of humiliation and of defeat it has shouted 'Victory.' And from pulpit after pulpit the doctrine is propounded that this war is not a judgment of our sins; that to speak of war as a judgment of sin is 'antiquated.' The Church has thus cut itself adrift from the teaching of prophet and seer, and the Bible, which is aflame with the judgments of God upon sin, is but the antiquated record of unenlightened ages. Thus the conscience of the nation is narcotised. And it is manifest that a nation whose conscience is chloroformed can hear no

call summoning to repentance. When the Church is blind to the sword of God flaming in the heavens, how can any expect the nation to behold it, and, beholding, to repent ?

This obsession that we are not living in a great day of divine judgment is all the stranger when we consider that every day of our lives is a day of divine judgment, and that we are ever standing at the bar of the great assize. No sooner does a man sin than judgment begins to operate. Let him surrender to intemperance, and the judgment of disordered nerves and enfeebled frame is immediately declared. And so with every violation of the divine order. And the judgment ever operative against the individual is also ever operative against the nation. It requires but little thought to see how the national sins brought on the nation the judgment of these dread days.

For what was it that brought down upon us the cataclysm of war ? It was the degeneration into which the nation

had fallen. Like all empires we had risen from poverty, through hardship and discipline, to riches, and in days of luxury we lost our soul. We gave ourselves to pleasure and self-indulgence. We worshipped at one shrine — that of Mammon. We refused to bend the back to discipline or to exercise ourselves in enduring hardship. We annexed a fourth of the world's surface, but we were determined that we would have the world without paying the price. With an army equal in size to that of Switzerland we were holding against the rest of mankind an Empire which included most of the world's riches. Our rulers knew of our danger, but they dared not summon the people to arms, because whoever did so would risk office. Those who were on the watch-towers saw the enemy mustering, but they gave no warning, for the spoils of office were dear. Prophets arose to warn us, but we meted out contempt to them. That was our fashion of stoning them. (We have,

however, improved upon the chosen race, for the very men who stoned them are already rearing statues in their honour!) Crowds of thirty thousand would assemble to shout and gamble over football matches, but the few days requisite for the training of our Territorial forces were not to be endured! We ceased to produce the population that could possess the vast territories we held. We could think of nothing but the vapourings of politicians who sacrificed the State to their faction. When Europe was an armed camp and Germany was piling up armaments, we were preparing for civil war in Ireland. Vision and genius were dying among us. For the devotees of Aphrodite and Mammon are blinded to the stars. A nation which sinks into degeneration, and which, holding the world's wealth, refuses even to prepare to guard its riches, is loudly inviting the robber. Germany concluded that we were degenerate and a negligible factor. Does any one think that, if we had begun to prepare after

Agadir, there would have been war? If Germany had for one moment thought that the British fleet would have been arrayed against it, and that Britain would have marshalled five millions of men to fight to the death, there never would have been a war. It is not enough to say that in that case the war would only have been postponed, for a war averted is not necessarily a war postponed. Pendjeh and Fashoda might at least teach us that.

Do not let us blind ourselves to the facts. One source of this war is in ourselves. We bewail the horrors of war; what we ought to bewail is the horror of sin. For war is only a symptom of the hidden disease, as raving is the symptom of fever. And one of the sources of the blood and tears that overwhelm the earth is our sin. The horror of the battlefield pales before the horror of sin in our streets, sweeping souls to death. Our surrender to pleasure, our pursuit of vanity, our sacrifice of the State to party, of the race to our ease, our refusal to

make the sacrifice that would make the Empire secure—these are the conditions which made war inevitable and which evoked it. As alcohol and the drunkard's palsied limbs are cause and effect, sin and judgment; so the national sin and the horrors of war are cause and effect, sin and judgment. Only the self-blinded are unable to discern that they are living in a great day of judgment: judgment on Germany for its greed and lust and covetousness: judgment on Britain for wasting at the shrine of self-indulgence that wealth committed to it for the serving and the uplifting of the world. And if the Church cannot see the divine judgment, then it cannot call the nation to repentance. For the nation, unconscious of wrong, will but say along with the Church: 'I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing.' After the war it will rush down the slope faster than ever before. The real fact is that the vision of God is hid from us by the mists of our sin. We cannot

imagine the sword of the divine judgment unsheathed over the world, for a sword hanging from heaven must be gripped by some hand. And if there be no hand of God, how can there be a sword of His justice ?

III

The one way of salvation for the human race is that of conformity to the righteous will of God. On the side of those who seek to walk along that road all the forces of nature fight; against those who resist the will of God all the forces of the universe are marshalled. Those who would conquer must walk with God. To return to God is the only hope. Let us try and realise the truth of this.

The greatest danger threatening the race is, as we have seen, that of racial suicide. The mentally developed have made the devitalising of life a code of conduct. Unconscious of sin, they have made sin a science. For the race that sets its face towards this goal there awaits

nought but ruin. The problem is how to save the race from the coffin.

A great many remedies have been proposed, but almost all of them are not only futile but pernicious. A system of bounties to parents for each child would be no inducement to the classes which have already surrendered to this degeneration. Such a policy would only encourage the further multiplying of the poor and the unfit. And the remedy is not to be found in the multiplication of agencies for the preservation of child life. The conservation of the child in the slum will not compensate for the destruction of the child in the mansion-house. A policy which aims at the survival of the unfit cannot enrich the race. Such methods are to be commended, but they are mere palliatives. When the bone needs to be scraped, it is futile to go on applying poultices.

The true remedy is in the realisation of God and in the return of the nation to Him. It is when the soul is awakened

to God that men realise the heinousness of sacrificing life to selfishness. For God is the fountain of life; and it is not merely the physical life that is atrophied by racial limitation. The blow is in reality aimed not at the race but at God.

For from God all life proceeds, and the whole universe is the process of His self-realisation. The glory of earth and sea and sky are the glory of the outgoing of the divine energy. But the highest of all the processes of the divine self-realisation is in man. In the world there is nothing great but man; and the world is enriched for God by His children. There is no limit to His creative energy, no failure in His imagination, for each new life is different, and each fresh and new. In His children God realises Himself as love and tenderness. They are the only things that can love and laugh and cling. The music of their joyous merriment is God's best anthems. Each new human life is a temple of the Holy

Ghost. Through them the divine life grows more and more. And to each is committed some separate element of the divine treasure, for each is as different from others as if it alone were created. When men, then, set themselves to suppress human life, they are setting themselves to suppress God. It is the great tide of the creative life that they set themselves to dam. The joyousness of the creative genius that ever creates but never repeats itself, they bring to nought. They deny to God on earth the temples for His indwelling. Only when the soul realises God thus brooding over the face of the world, thus waiting for the fulness of the divine enrichment, will men realise the heinousness of life-suppression. Lives based on the code of morals which prefers coffins to cradles are lives which fight against God, and as such are doomed to be ground to powder by His judgment. When God, the source of all life, is once realised, then the soul of the life-destroyer must shrink back in horror and dismay.

'Woe is me, for I am undone,' will be the cry of his lips. Men can conquer their fellows, but there is only the devouring of hell for those who fight against God. When God ceased to be a reality, the destruction of life was but a natural sacrifice to our ease. There being nothing higher than ourselves, then to ourselves let us sacrifice even life. When God in His divine majesty will again shine forth before the soul, and the eyes behold the Divine Life everywhere waiting its realisation, then human life again shall become precious and desired, and the race will measure its felicity by the multitude of its children. The silent terraces will again ring with joyous voices. The race, with its fountains of life overflowing, will again go forth to vivify the earth.

If only the world were realised as of God, all our difficulties would vanish. Think what it would mean to the man who has devoted a whole parish to his own recreation. The green places where

little children called to each other are covered with pheasant coops ! The places where children could grow in health are given over to birds. Let such a man once see that the world was created that love might increase and be multiplied, that on it God might realise His creative energy in the highest form, and he will be stricken with shame and convicted of sin. Childhood and innocence he has vanished from his land that his ears might hear the whirr of the flying of grouse, and that he might have the joy of killing. When the vision of God arises upon him he will abhor his selfishness and set himself to repair the desolation that has been wrought. He will have no rest until the green places again are filled with the glory and the radiance of life. The slums will be emptied and the now silent places peopled anew, when the nation realises again that God created the world to be the home of His children.

In this return to God is the solution to be found of all our difficulties. For

in this return is the discovery of our common sonship, and of the law of love.

We are at present divided into classes with warring interests waiting for peace to begin the strife again. The body-politic is fissiparous and there is nothing to bind it together in the unity and consistency of steel. Here is the element through which the disintegrated elements can be united into a weapon that can win victories. At the feet of God there comes the knowledge that all we are brethren, and that the one law is love. It is love that unites. It is love that bridges chasms and throws down dividing walls. Love does not throw doles to the perishing, it gives itself. Love never says, 'You carry my burden,' but rather, 'Let me carry your burden.' To the eye of love, man is no longer a mere crank in the great machinery of labour, a unit in the vast mass designated the 'lower classes'—he is a brother. And love will not give a brother over to be the prey of vice,

or surrender him as a victim to monopolies that destroy him. Love will sacrifice and fight for the brother's life. The remedy for all our ills lies here—in our return to God.

IV

To many the preaching of repentance is the dreariest of all things. It is but the voice summoning them to the impossible—to mourn for sins of which they are unconscious. They cry out for life—and they are offered tears.

But far from being compact of all weariness and sorrow, repentance is the most thrilling of all that the soul can experience. It is the essence of all romance. For what is it but this—the turning back to God. And in turning to God comes the vision of the glory of life. The eyes are illumined with radiance when they behold no longer processes and laws—but God. Who can compute that enrichment when suddenly the veil is rent and from some hill-top the eyes behold

no longer meadow and moorland and the gleam of waters afar, but the Life behind them all—God; and everything created, the green sward and the clouds swimming in glory, the mist-caressed mountains and the great sea heaving in all its waves, become but one vast transparency through which God flashes His splendour on the enraptured soul. And in this return to God the soul is ever led on from glory to glory. That is the alluring power of Christianity. The Shepherd of souls leads us ever on until we come to the Cross and realise that the God of heaven and earth is the God of sacrifice; that His love stoops to agony that He may save. And onward from the Cross He leads until on our enraptured hearts there rises the vision of the Cross abiding still in the heart of God, and our eyes behold over all the universe the sheen of that love which still stoops to death that it may save. As we tread the way back, and go on ever nearer to the hidden fire, we feel the flame of His love filling all our

being. And beauties undreamed of leap into light at each bend of the road. To come to God is to journey from death to life. The world has nothing great comparable to this.

v

But to return to God means not only a transfigured soul in a transfigured world, it means also a transfigured life. To turn the face Godward is to change one's ideal, and the change of ideal eventuates in a change of life. When the new light illumines the secret places, the soul, quickened by the fellowship of God, sees the unclean with new eyes, and sets itself to conquer whatsoever is unworthy of God. National repentance with us will realise itself in peopling the waste places, in emptying the slums into the country, in destroying the vested interests in the vice of the people, in making a healthy and beautiful life the birthright of every citizen. For the Church that will give itself to the realisation of this repent-

ance there will never be the stagnation of monotony. Life will be electric with conflict, triumphant at last with victory.

It is the thrill and romance of life—this experience of the soul to which we are summoned. It heralds every great day of God. 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' is the herald of every dawn. It is a message to be preached with yearning and wonder and love, and not with clenched fists. It can be preached with fierceness, but that will little avail. The prophet can call to the people: 'Return, for the precipice is in front of you and destruction yawneth at your feet—return.' But terror is feeble to move the heart. Better far is it to call to the people as Hosea called to Israel: 'Return, for God is behind you; your own God who saved you again and again when there was none to help, who bore you and carried you through the terrible wilderness. . . . Return, God is waiting for you, just behind you.' The gospel of repentance is the gospel of the love of

God. When the soul realises the love and the tenderness and the glory of God waiting to enrich and save—then the soul will return. The greatest adventure in life is just this: the way of repentance leading back to God. If only the Church would voyage forth anew on this enchanted sea, the day of its power would again dawn.

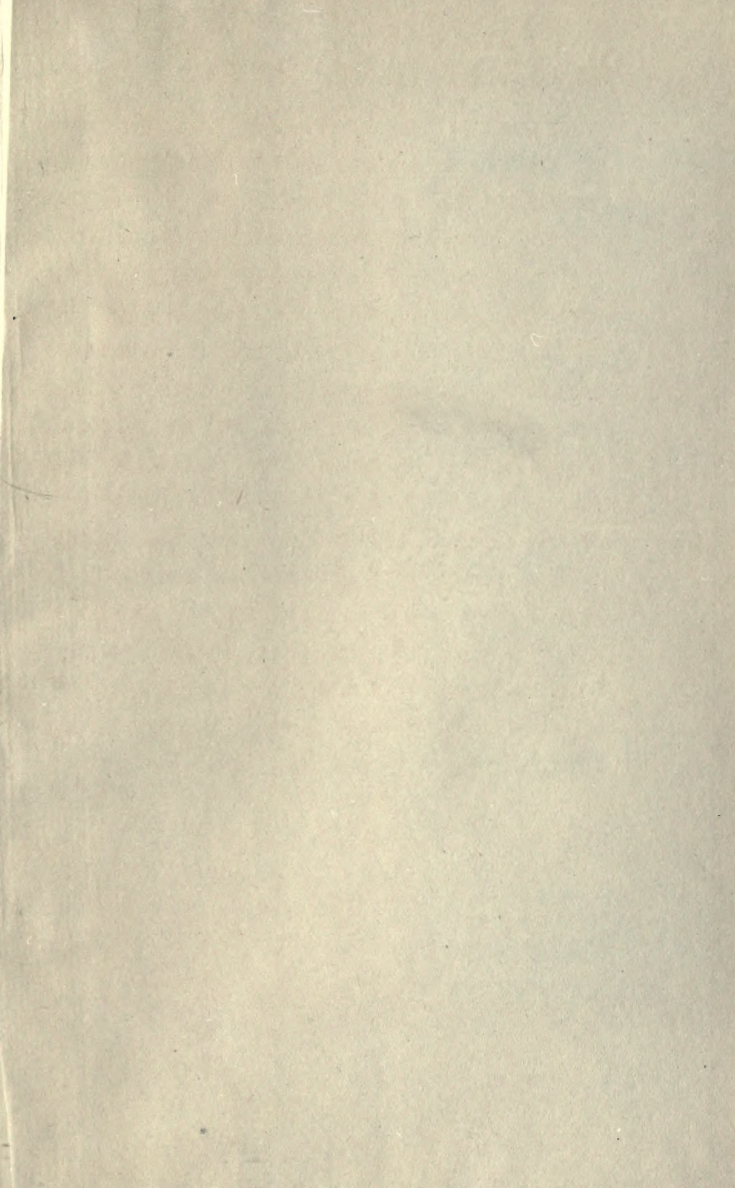
VI

If there be, thus, the wonder of riches untold, the gleam of virgin peaks summoning our feet to climb, a glimpse of the land afar, and the clear shining of God's face in the call to repent, let us not forget that there is also something very terrible bound up with it. And the terrible thing is that it is possible so to disregard it that at last it becomes impossible to obey it. In vain did the prophet call, 'O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God,' for their paralysed wills had become incapable of effort. 'Their deeds will not let them return,' was at last the prophet's

mournful verdict. To every nation there comes, after long decline, the stage when recovery is impossible. When the warnings of the wise have been flouted and disregarded; when the prophets have not been stoned but treated with mere contempt; when there is no discernment because there is no longer any consciousness of sin; when no call of the divine is audible any longer even when God speaks by terrible things and the heavens are shaken; when the hearts steeped in self and surrendered to the flesh can see no longer the beauty of purity,—then the call to repentance is heard as one hears voices in sleep. Their deeds will not let them return.

It is not very far away from us that last irrevocable stage when national repentance becomes impossible. A nation such as this, that spends over half a million pounds sterling a day on alcohol when the greatest crisis in the world's history requires all its strength and all its resources; that turns grain into a

waste when food is so dear that the poor can scarcely buy; that cries out for economy and offers daily at the shrine of Bacchus the ransom of a province; that suffers vice to wound and slay its children, narcotising its conscience the while; that in God's terrible day empties its churches and crowds its music-halls; that sacrifices its children to the Moloch of its pleasure, or to the greed of its property exploiters; that suffers its people to be massed in slums until the body-politic becomes a gangrene,—for such a people the last stage, where no return is possible, cannot be far removed. Arise, O Israel, and return to the Lord your God, ere the day of repentance sinks into night!



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